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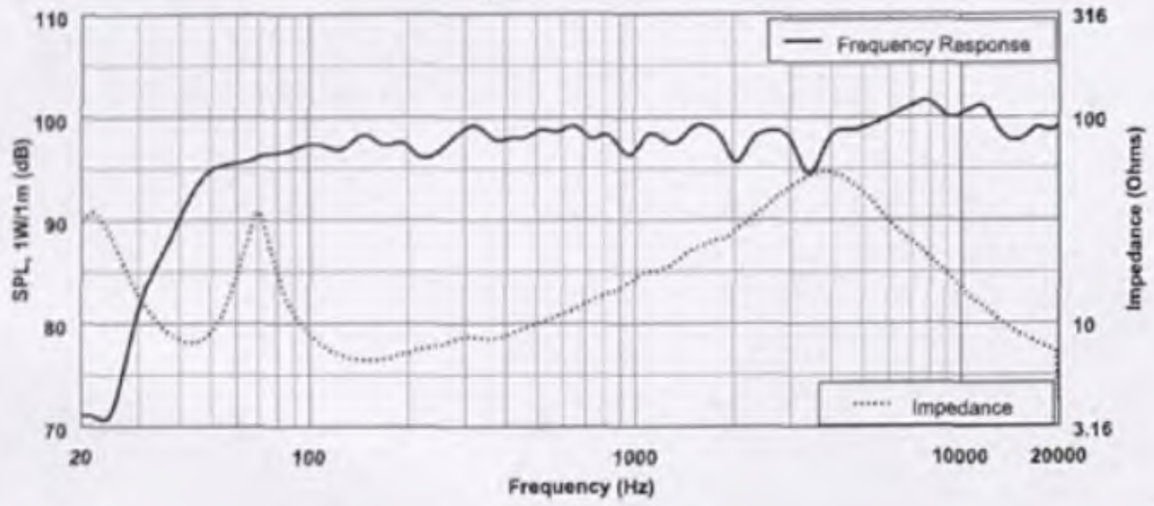

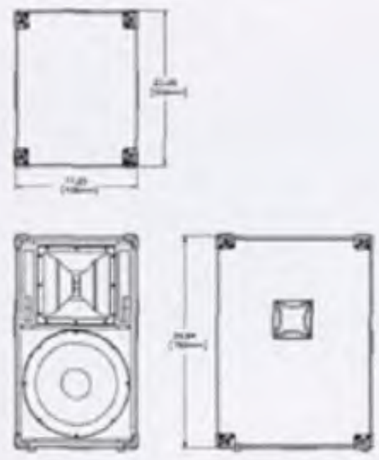

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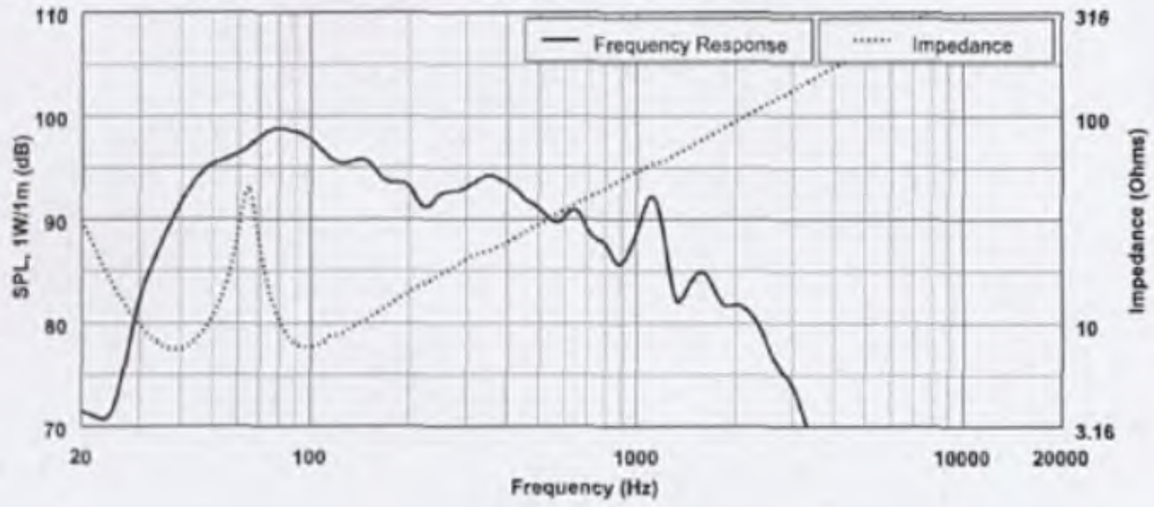

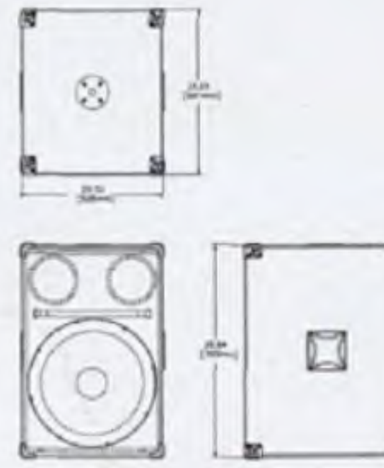

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MOBILE BEAT

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Digital Revolution, Take Two

Technically, "digital DJing" began when the first CD was played by a DJ at a gig, almost twenty years ago. These days, however, I've heard many people use the expression as shorthand for the switch to computer-based performance that more and more DJs are making. There are some interesting comparisons and contrasts to be made between the previous "digital revolution" and the one underway right now. Convenience, in the guises of compactness and mobility, remains a key issue. CDs offered a space savings over vinyl; MP3s packed on hard drives offer even more. Bulletproof digital sound was a wonderful development for DJs, who, more than any other users, put a lot of wear and tear on their media. Today, the differences in sound quality (between CD audio and MP3 compression) are not so dramatic. More important is the potential for computers to not only carry tons of songs, but also make them easy to play, sort, edit, etc.

Thus, Mobile DJs are embracing the idea of computer music performance. This issue's cover story finds a number of cyber DJs sounding off on how the transition is going. Also, our NAMM report reveals a bunch of exciting developments in the continuing digital revolution.

However helpful the technology may be, DJs still have to focus on the human element. To help you improve, we've added "Interactive Connection", an exciting new column by performance expert and Mobile Beat DJ Show speaker, Todd Mitchem. We also take a fresh look at the continuing debate about the worth of a DJ's services, in articles by Mike Ficher and Mark Johnson. Your response to the ideas offered is certainly welcome!

Like MP3 files on a hard drive, there's a lot more packed into these pages, so open it up and enjoy!

Dan Walsh
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FEEDBACK

Hi,

I am a long time reader. I think the magazine is great!

I am a professional disc jockey and singer, and as an option can include karaoke with the guests. I do mostly weddings, but do other types of functions too. My first degree is in music, and my second degree is in computer science and business.

I currently have to bring a lot of equipment and discs with me. I have noticed DJ hardware and software packages that are available. From what I have read, DJPower seems to be the best one. However, I am concerned about switching over, because of potential computer problems. I have to have dependable equipment, especially for weddings.

Have you tested any of the computer hardware and software available? If yes, what do you think of them? Please include what you think of the sound quality. My understanding is that they utilize compressed files, which means some of the sound is taken out, yet they call them CD quality.

Thank you for your help.

– Anonymous

Dear Anonymous – Good timing with your question! Check out what a number of computerized DJs have to say about making the transition in our feature story on page 46, "DJs and Computer DJing." In our "E-Beat" section, Tony Barthel also takes a look at the newest innovations that have been added to the DJPower software. "E-Beat" is dedicated to keeping you up-to-date on the latest developments in computer-based DJ technology, as well as other music-oriented tools. In previous columns, we've reviewed PCDJ from Visiosonic, FinalScratch from Stanton and other DJ programs.

There are a lot of possibilities when it comes to hardware/software combinations for DJs. As our feature article points out, stability is becoming less and less of an issue. Here at Mobile Beat, while we have enjoyed trying out the major software programs, we haven't had the opportunity to try a lot of different hardware configurations. I would suggest taking a look at a few of the many DJ chat boards now available online, and post your questions in the computer technology forums. You are sure to get a lot of food for thought about which hardware and software DJs have found most reliable in the field.

In reference to sound quality, MP3 files created at a data rate of 128 kbps and a 44.1 kHz sampling rate are typically considered "CD-quality," but this is definitely a subjective judgment. Compression certainly does remove portions of the sound, but they are supposed to be portions that the human ear will not perceive anyway. The only way to come to your own conclusion is to hook up a device that can play MP3s to your sound system and listen for yourself! – Ed.

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VIDEO PROVIDERS CONVERGE

Promo Only, Inc. and ETV Network have finalized a merger agreement that will consolidate the two promotional music video services, making the joint venture the largest subscriber-based music video company in the nation. The merger marries the two companies' distinct areas of expertise: Promo Only's many years of serving the DJ/hospitality industry, with ETV's track record for excellence in the corporate/retail arena.

"This is a move designed to play to each of our strengths," said Jim Robinson, director for Promo Only. "It's our shared vision that this merger will allow us to better serve those who matter most—our subscribers."

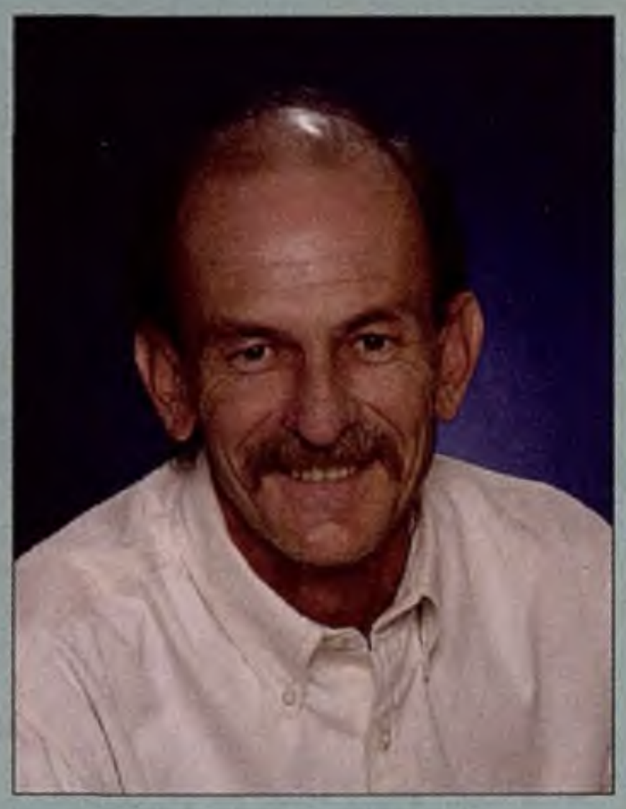
"We think it's a perfect pairing," added Gary Hunt of ETV Network. "One that brings a synergy to our industry that can only benefit everyone involved."

Current plans include the consolidation of each company's vast video libraries, the integration of all production and customer service to Promo Only's Orlando offices, and the expansion of facilities to include Chicago offices.

Questions about current ETV subscriptions can be addressed by contacting the Promo Only offices at 407-331-3600. For more info, go to either www.promoonly.com or www.etvnet.com.

JUICE

NEW SPEAKER DRIVER AT QSC



Dennis Goettsch

QSC Audio Products, Inc. (www.qscaudio.com) appointed Dennis Goettsch to the position of Loudspeaker Product Planner. Prior to joining QSC, Goettsch held the position of Director of Engineering for Radian Audio Engineering. In his new position, Goettsch will oversee all aspects of QSC's loudspeaker development programs.

Goettsch brings over 20 years of professional audio experience to QSC. His background encompasses both the manufacturing and production aspects of loudspeaker development. Goettsch has served as Manager of Engineering at Eastern Acoustic Works as well as Product Manager for JBL Professional.

"I'm really pleased to be joining QSC," states Goettsch. "QSC is widely recognized throughout our industry as a leading force in sound reinforcement. The opportunity to contribute to the company's loudspeaker programs is exciting. There's a wealth of opportunity in the marketplace for quality loudspeakers and I look forward to being part of QSC's development process."

"We are equally excited to have Dennis join our team," states Barry Ferrell, QSC's Senior Product Development Manager. "Dennis has a wealth of experience with loudspeakers for the pro audio market and we see his position as a critical component toward guiding QSC's relatively new efforts in this area."

RANE IN THE HOUSE

Andrew Garnett of Brighton, England won an in-home performance from Ninja Tunes recording artist, Kid Koala. The visit took place on Sunday, December 14, 2003. Andrew and his guests enjoyed chocolate fondue while they were treated to a private performance and the Kid's own version of bingo. Kid Koala mixed on a Rane TTM 56 mixer, spent some time teaching DJ skills and then left the system behind as an additional prize for lucky Andrew. Besides the mixer, the system included a Rane ME 15b equalizer, two D.A.S. DS-115A powered speakers, two Technics turntables, a set of Sennheiser HD25 headphones, and all the necessary cables. Kid Koala was scheduled to visit the North American winner in January 2004.

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EASY DOES IT ON THE WEB

At the recent Mobile Beat DJ Show and Conference in Las Vegas, during the "Revolutionize Your DJ Business" seminar, ProDJ.com debuted a new service for DJ companies. Called EZDJWebsites.com, it is aimed at DJs who have been hesitant to set up their own Web sites because of the costs, and who need flexibility without a major time investment or steep learning curve. It is a "brother" service to DJ Webmin and a "cousin" to DJ Intelligence. The new hosting service was developed by staff member Kerry McCullough.

For years, clients have been asking ProDJ.com for an easy option for setting up a basic Web site, so they can establish their Web presence quickly and inexpensively, while still being able to customize it on their own. Aiming to fulfill that request, EZDJWebsites.com promises quick account setup, a choice of design template options, with customizable buttons and pages, plus easy integration with DJ Intelligence and other Web based tools. Hosted in the same facility as ProDJ.com's other premium sites, these are full "dot-com" sites, but without services such as script access and "POP" style email.

GLOBETROTTING WITH NEW ASSOCIATION AND TRAVELERS

29-year mobile entertainment veteran Art Bradlee, along with his partner, David Armstrong (concert promoter and co-producer of major artists such as Bruce Springsteen, Cher and others), have announced the formation of the Global Mobile Entertainers Association (GMEA).

Member benefits of the new organization include both liability and equipment insurance, including DJ trailer and computer hard drive coverage, underwritten by the world-renowned Travelers Insurance Company.

"I have heard numerous accounts of facilities that are not letting DJs in the door without liability insurance," reported Bradlee. In response, he negotiated an insurance arrangement that can be tailored to the varying needs of DJs. "Travelers has graciously consented to a generous payment plan...quarterly, semi-annually, ten payments, or annually."

GMEA provides discounts on music, audio equipment, lighting, DJ software, glow items, and more. Discounted long distance telephone service, and merchant credit card processing services with competitive bank fees are also available. Other helpful benefits include financial and estate planning, prepaid legal services, and free marketing/sales tips and documents. Health care benefits are planned, as well. Current corporate marketing partners include Gem Sound, Priddis Music and Magic Glo.

An online member newsletter, a chat room, and bulletin boards help GMEA members interact with other mobile entertainment professionals across the globe.

For more info, call 877-DJ-ASSOC or go to www.globalmobile.org.

MIXER LAUNCH FEATURES LIVE ACTION

Allen & Heath was scheduled to launch the new Xone:92 professional DJ mixer at the 2004 Winter NAMM Show with a series of live performances by California-based DJ Brett King, along with sets by DJ Christopher Lobsinger.

A rising star on the Southern California club scene, DJ Brett King (www.djbrettking.com) offers up a stompin' style of dark and devastating progressive house that takes listeners on a journey through a wide spectrum of deep and eerie bass-driven sounds. His tough style has been bumping dance floors since his first public appearance at Elements in Orange County, while his slick mixing skills have landed him at an ever-increasing array of clubs in Southern California, including Spundae, Traffic, Las Palmas/Monday Social, and The Viper Room. Brett currently holds a residency with Traffic Events and on Eccentricbeats.com with his weekly Internet radio show, "Evolution Fridays."

Dubbed a *wunderkind* by many, sixteen-year-old DJ Christopher Lobsinger (www.christopherlobsinger.com) has been attracting interest from major dance labels and DJs. He has taken the dance world by storm with his natural mixing talents. With the encouragement and support of Gianni, a top resident DJ at San Francisco's legendary Spundae, Christopher produced his first progressive DJ mix CD two years ago, which led to a regular show on Internet-based Proton Radio's "San Francisco Sessions." Since then, he has been webcasted all over the world on Thump Radio, U4EA (Belgium), and Mercury Server.

List Adjustment

In the March issue's Top 200 song list, the artist for number 99, "Fishin' in the Dark" was incorrectly listed as Alabama. It should have been The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band. –*Ed.*

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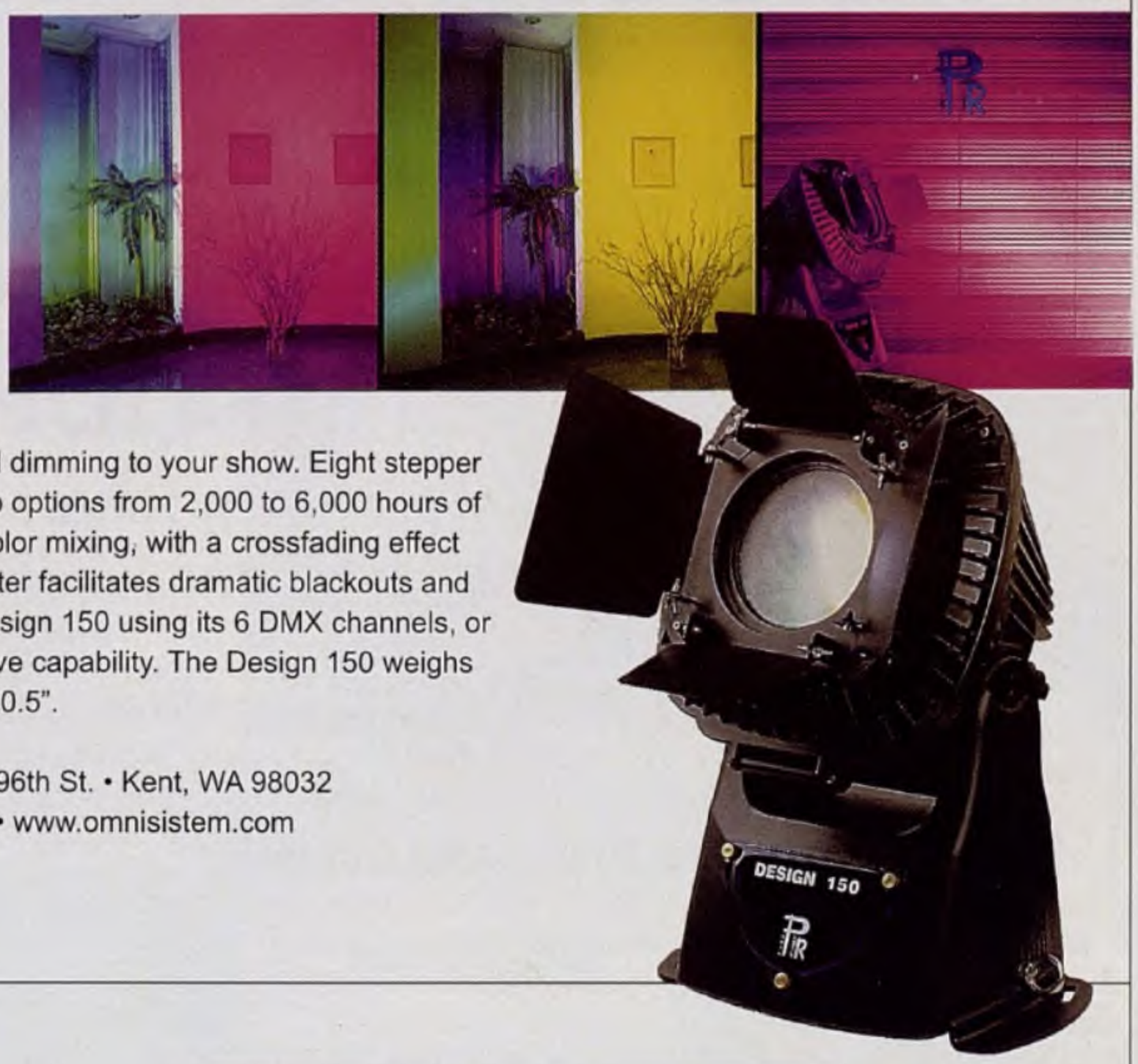

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IT'S IN THE BAG

To help you get where you're going in style, **Gemini** presents five stylish new **record bags** designed especially for professional DJs. Constructed from rugged nylon, and available in multiple colors, they come in three different styles to use for transporting records, accessories and even audio gear.

The **SB-30** is a sleek, over-the-shoulder-style backpack that holds 30 records and provides a total of 12 pockets to hold headphones, a cell phone, IDs, and other DJ accessories. A padded shoulder strap, along with carry handles and backpack straps make travel comfortable. Side adjustment straps also ensure that the bag feels secure even when not full. A padded base ensures the survival of your precious vinyl.

The **EB-70** is a larger carrier-style DJ bag, with fully padded thermal foam protection, which can hold up to 70 pieces of your best wax. It is also available as the **EBT-70**, with an integrated trolley system and tough telescopic handle. Stack an EB-70 on the rolling unit for extra capacity.

The **PB-80/PBT-80** carrier-style bags feature even stronger nylon and a PVC under-coating. Two padded protective pouches are included, one for headphones and the other for a removable 25 CD sleeve wallet. A removable foam-lined internal container allows you to partition two useable areas. The PB-80 can hold up to 80 LPs and can even handle DJ mixers or other hardware. MSRPs: $39.95 - $129.95

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Edison, NJ 08837
Tel: 732-738-9003 • Fax: 732-738-9006
www.geminidj.com

It's Hot

MADE OF STARS

Do you want to add instant excitement and drama to your presentation? Why not perform in front of a curtain of moving lights that are chasing to the music. Now any Mobile DJ can drape a professional-looking chasing-light backdrop behind their booth, thanks to the new **LED Curtain** from **American DJ**. The black nylon curtain contains more than 100 LEDs, which are known for producing extremely sharp, brilliant points of light. They cost much less than the fiber optics that were used in most light curtains in the past. A chase controller comes with the curtain system. The lights can be set to operate in 3 modes: All Lights On, Sound Active, or Chase (moving to built-in programs). In addition to the curtain and controller, a tripod stand system (two tripods and a crossbar), along with a carrying bag, are included. The entire assembled system measures 123" wide by 82" high. MSRP: $599.95

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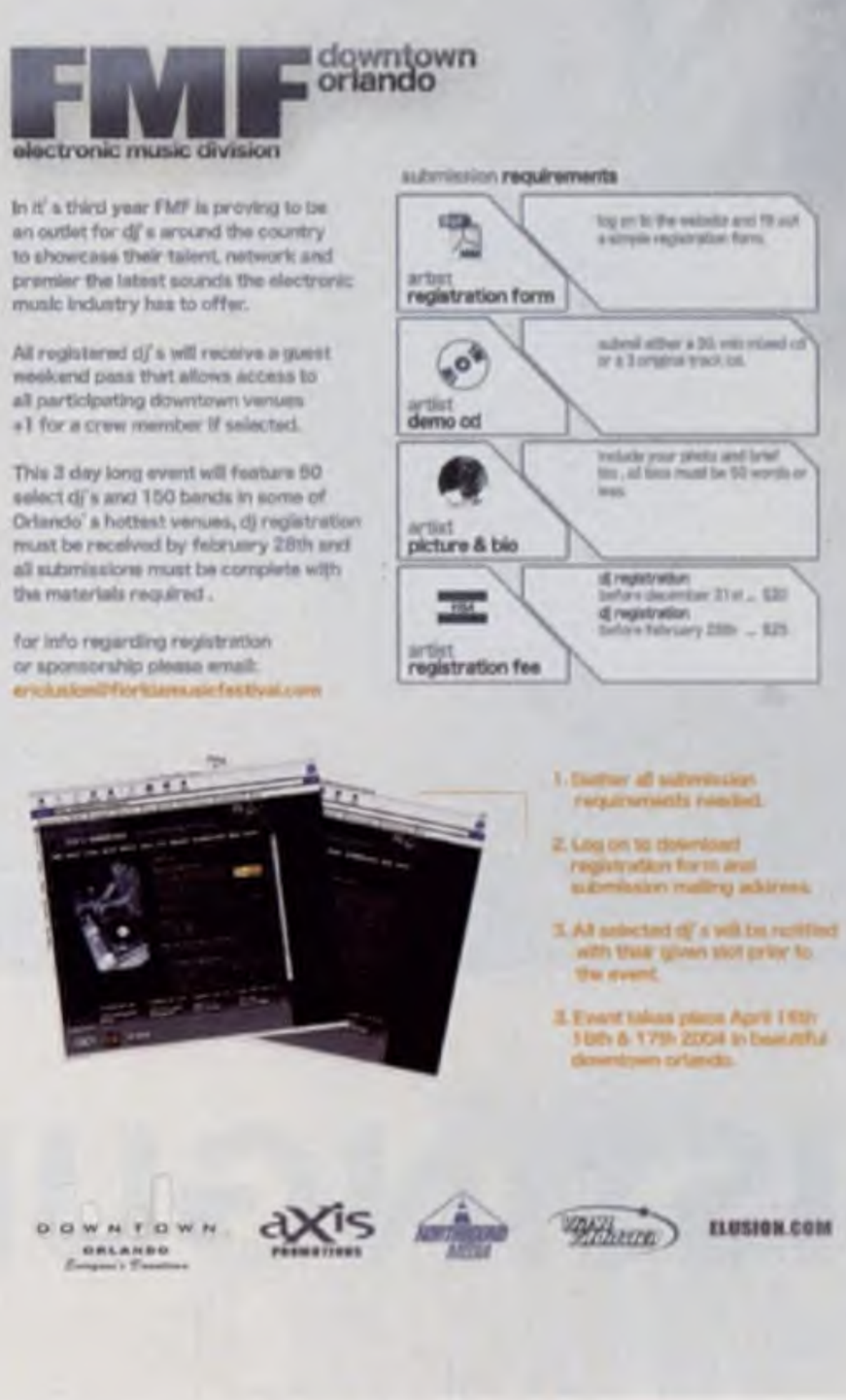
Tel: 800-322-6337 • Fax: 323-582-2610 • www.americandj.com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NEW PRODUCTS

GRAB A HOT ONE

At Winter NAMM 2004, **PVDJ** (a division of **Peavey Electronics Corporation**) introduced the new **Grabber sampling module**, which allows DJs to automatically create or "grab" audio loops with a single touch of a button. While most samplers require start- and end-point editing, the Grabber automatically creates perfect loops using its built-in BPM counter, and automatically syncs the loop to your main mix tempo. The Grabber features separate buttons for 1, 2, 4, 8 and 16-beat loops. It also includes a jog wheel for phasing effects and other fine adjustments, and a selector switch that enables reverse play. You can layer up to 6 loops simultaneously. The unit allows variable sample rates up to 96 kHz and 24-bit resolution. MSRP: TBA

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Meridian, MS 39301
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GIVE ME A VISUAL ON THAT MIX

The **DCD-PRO1000**, the latest **professional dual CD player** from **American Audio**, comes equipped with nine digital effects, Power Touch™ jog wheels and all the other performance tools found on the company's acclaimed Velocity CD player, while adding a bright new LCD display to each side. The display provides DJs with vital information at a glance, featuring a track indicator, total/remain time, pitch/bpm meter, play/pause/cue indicator, single/loop/reloop and more. One notable new feature on the LCD display is a Visual Marker, which gives users a handy visual reference for viewing exactly where a disc is playing. Other features include tempo lock (master tempo); ±4, 8, 16% and up to +100% pitch control; seamless loop; reverse play; true instant start; anti-shock memory; and Fader Q Start (when used with compatible American Audio Q-Series Mixers). There are also 3 Flash Start sampler buttons per side, each holding a 6-second sample that can play with or without a CD in the drive. MSRP: $1,049.95

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The new **LMX-3 Color Spot** and **Color Wash** from **Odyssey** feature LED technology that provides stable, intense, fade-free color. With 145 LEDs packed into a compact body design enclosing a built-in power supply, it can be used in almost any environment you might find yourself in. RGB color mixing allows infinite color possibilities via a DMX controller (4 channels: red, green, blue, dimmer/strobing). The units' basic colors include: red, yellow, blue, green, orange, indigo, purple, cyan, pink, light pink, and violet. The LMX-3 units feature sound-active and demo modes. The Color Spot provides a 15° beam spread, while the Color Wash gives you 60°. These units boast a lifespan of up to 100,000 hours. Each measures 4.25" L x 5.75" W x 4.5"H and weighs two pounds. MSRPs: $319.90 ea.

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The Road Goes Ever On...

By Mobile Beat Staff

...and the DJ products industry has taken a very encouraging turn

1. Spinning women–clockwise from upper left: DJ Katrina at TASCAM; Kelly Barrett at Numark; Nicole Hoek at Rane; DJ Annalyze & Shortee at Stanton.

2. American Audio's CDI 300 turns the tables

3. Nailing your Technics–F to B: SL-DZ1200, SH-MZ1200, classic 1200.

4. The Crystal Method gets busy at the M-Audio booth.

Covering the Winter NAMM tradeshow is always fun but always requires stamina for those assigned to get the scoop on all the latest gear. This year, the long and winding road was lined with the most new products for DJs in a number of years, including some technology never seen before. Manufacturers are apparently poised to take full advantage of the upswing in the economy. If you have been holding off on new gear purchases, 2004 is looking like a good year to take the plunge and update your system. And if you are just entering the professional DJ world and building an equipment arsenal, you picked a good time to start shopping.

What follows is the most compact overview of the 2004 Winter NAMM Show's abundance of DJ products that we could manage. Look for expanded coverage, with more product info and pictures, at www.mobilebeat.com.

PA Equipment

There was a noticeable trend this year in the realm of mobile sound reproduction toward matched speaker/amp/PA mixer systems and powered top box/subwoofer systems. A bit bigger than the rest, but still mobile, was B-52's Matrix system. (See review on page 32.) For compactness, the TV100 Traveler from Crate, an upcoming dual-speaker/sub combo from Peavey, the Road Gear series from Phonic (see It's Hot for more info), and Yorkville's M8P1/P2 were of note.

Anchor Audio's Liberty system combined a speaker, amp and wireless mic in one battery-powered unit. Soundcraft, the high-end mixer maker, also entered the fray with a couple of portable PA units, the GigRac 300 and 600. Another new self-contained yet powerful unit was Soundtech's AL12R PA System.

Many interesting new speakers came from Cerwin-Vega (ProStax™), Dynacord (M15, M18), EV (SxA360), JBL (JRX Series), Peavey (a redesigned SP Series), QSC (Isis I-82H), Yamaha (BR Series), Yorkville (C-170), and others. Bag End showed off an extremely compact, 10" subwoofer, the S-10D. The DnD12 and 15 heralded a new line of heavy-duty mobile enclosures from Community. On display by State of the Art Music, NlightN's flat-panel speakers sported new printed graphics sheets that can blend in or stand out as desired. Samson was going after the live sound market with their new Resound line of speakers and a number of powered mixers, including the 10-channel XM910, which includes a crossfader to mix between dual CD inputs.

Crest introduced the CD and CM amp lines. The iTech series from Crown packed clean power into 2RU units, each under 30 pounds. QSC unleashed their big dog, the 1100-watt (8Ω) RMX 5050. The J Series of amps was displayed by TAPCO, Mackie's new PA brand. Yamaha unveiled its P Series of amps, featuring 4 new models.

1. Laptop sound enrichment: Echo Digital's Indigo-DJ.

2. The S-10D 10" condensed sub from Bag End.

3. DJ Puzzle serves up jazz-hop hors d'oeuvres at Sennheiser's party.

Microphones

AKG's D 3800 M featured easy conversion between wired and wireless operation. The next generation of Midnight Blues mics, including a variety of vocal models (MB1k, MB3k) was unveiled by Audio-Technica. Azden's 511DRH UHF wireless system was also of interest to DJs. dB Technologies introduced digital feedback suppression circuitry in its new wireless mics (WM and PU series). Designed for high sound quality combined with roadworthiness, Shure's SLX wireless systems were displayed. Sennheiser announced its redesigned *evolution* G2 wireless systems to great fanfare, and demonstrated them at its dealer appreciation concert, which featured DJ Puzzle as an opener and headliner Vertical Horizon.

2004 looks like a good year to take the plunge and update your system.

Headphones

More and more quality headphones for DJs, with flexible features and without huge price tags, were in evidence. American Audio (HP-500), Gemini (DJX-1, Eggphones), Numark (PHX), and Stanton (DJ Pro 3000), all released 'phones to complement their other DJ gear. Others, such as Nady (QH 660), Sennheiser (HD 650), and Sony (MDR-7505) added DJ-specific models to their lines. Ultrasone listened to suggestions from DJs and updated its multi-transducer HFI.550 and HFI.650 models with more low-end punch.

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1. The DVJ-X1 from Pioneer lets you scratch video.

2. Always something eccentric at NAMM: Leon Gruenbaum shows his Samchillian MIDI controller.

3. The JRX 100 from JBL points sound where it needs to go.

4. Numark's breakthrough HDCD1 hard drive/CD player.

Processors

At NAMM, you can always find legions of wonder-boxes that DJs can use to achieve better or more interesting sound, and this year was typical. Notably, BBE rolled out a series of multi-tasking units that combine Sonic Maximizer technology with other useful functions like a crossovers (Max X2 and X3) and a compressor (MaxCom). For hands-on effects fun, Gemini introduced its other-worldly DSP-1 unit, and Korg rolled out the KAOSS Pad *entrancer*, which adds video effects to its menu of fingertip audio controls.

DJ Mixers

American Audio showcased the Q-Spand MkII 4-channel mixer. The unit's makeover included bar-style LEDs for monitoring audio levels, among a host of other new features. Allen & Heath unveiled its latest club mixer masterpiece, the Xone:92. The DN-X1500 from Denon was officially unveiled, featuring a host of digital effects, flexible input routing and monitoring capabilities designed to play well with all the company's latest CD players. Gem Sound added the VMX-50 and 60 (2 and 3 channels respectively) to its mixer line. The 24-bit digital DXM01-USB from Numark included USB input/output allowed playback from and recording to computers. PVDJ showed the knob-controlled, flexible Rotomix (reviewed on page 28). Pioneer's new DJM 909 featured extensive controls, including a touchscreen for tweaking onboard effects. Adding a removable effects module, Stanton upgraded its DJ Craze-designed SA-12 mixer to the SA-12X. As a partner to its new digital turntable (see the Players section), Technics debuted the SH-MZ1200 DJ mixer, with 12 inputs. Vestax added a number of models to its PMC line, including the PMC 500 5-channel unit.

Putting video mixing more easily into DJs' hands, Edirol debuted the V-1 and the LVS-400, both 4-channel video mixers.

Turntables

American Audio revealed two sleek new turntables, the HTI 3.8 and DTI 1.9. The PT01 from Numark added a portable model for previewing vinyl to the company's stable of turntables. Vestax dressed up its high-torque PDX-2000 with a new sleek black finish and added BLK to its moniker. The PDX line also saw 4 new models introduced.

Players

American Audio's DCD-PRO 240 dual CD player was in the spotlight, along with its big brother, the DCD-PRO 1000. (See It's Hot for more on the latter.) Two new tabletop units, the CDI 500 and CDI 300 were also unveiled. Denon's new DN-D4000 dual CD/MP3 player was on display. Denon also augmented its DN-S3000 and DN-S5000 tabletop CD/MP3 players with an adapter that now lets you use any vinyl record to control digital scratching. The latest dual CD/MP3 player from Gemini, the MPX-3 was on hand, sporting a streamlined front panel and attractive black metal finish. The CFX-40 and 50 dual CDPs offered similar good looks and ample effects. Gemini showed two new table units, as well, the CDJ-01 and 02.

Numark made multiple splashes with some unique products. The HDCD1 was debuted as the first hard drive playback solution for DJs. The unit combines a 40 GB hard drive with a dual CD player that can also rip tracks. It even records to disc from line inputs. Two other playback units marked a visual direction for Numark: the DVD01, a dual DVD player for DJs, and the CDN25+G, with CDG capability and video outputs. The CDX, with its vinyl/turntable motor control of CDs, also got a workout.

A dramatic industry first came from Pioneer—the DVJ-X1. Scratching DVD video is now a viable option for DJ/VJs with this unit.PVDJ's Grabber sampling module was on display. (See It's Hot for details.)TASCAM added CD-X1500 and CD-X1700 dual CDPs to its DJ line, and also debuted the TT-M1, an adapter that allows almost any turntable to easily control CD playback. The long-awaited Technics SL-DZ1200 digital turntable was fully unleashed on the DJ world, with DJ Gerald "World-Wide" Webb deftly spinning its steel wheel.

Computer Software and Hardware

There was plenty of computer stuff specifically aimed at DJs. Echo Digital released a dual-stereo, 24-bit soundcard especially for DJs using laptops, dubbed Indigo-DJ. At the Kaysound booth, the DJ Console from Hercules, recently reviewed in *Mobile Beat*, was exposed to a wider audience. It combines an external USB soundcard with extensive DJ controls. Kaysound is also distributing the latest version of D-Vinyl 2020 and DJPad 2020 from Soundgraph. PCDJ provided a sneak peak at its upcoming PCDJ Scratch VRM module. Adding an actual turntable interface, it will allow DJs to sample any sound on the fly and scratch

Performance with MP3s and DVDs took some giant steps forward.

1. New Stanton marketing man Pablo La Rosa models DJ Pro 3000 'phones.

2. Computer power in your rack: PVDJ's Digital Audio Interface (DAI).

3. DJ Bootcamp commander Donte D'one explains the DJ profession at seminar.

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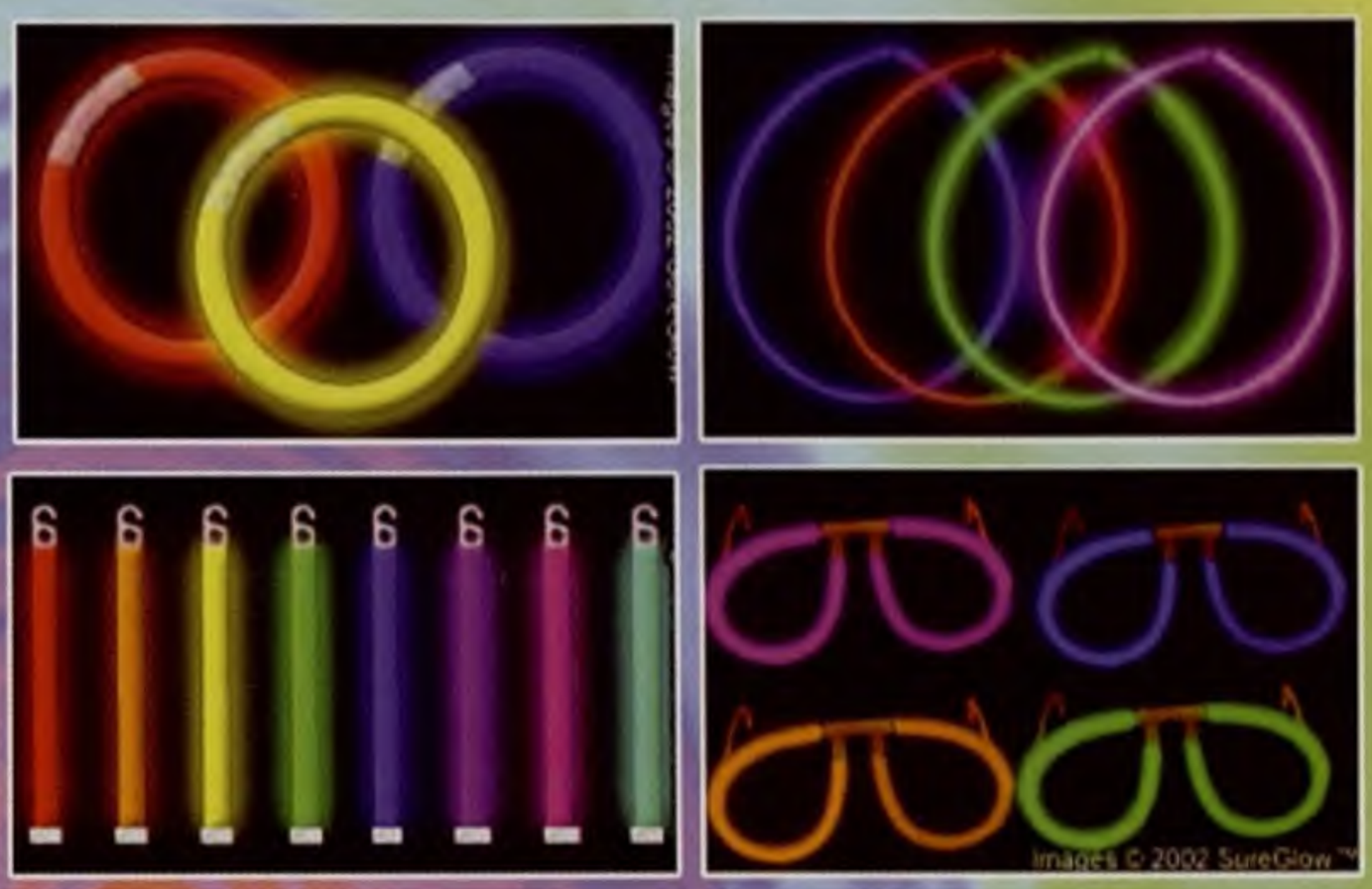

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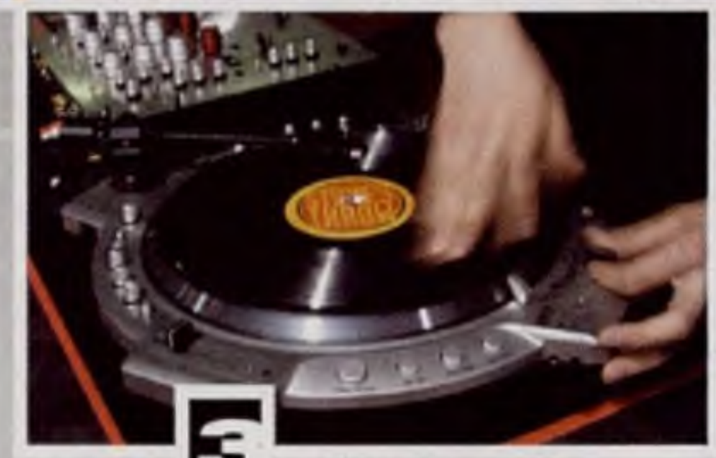

1. The next gen checks out Denon; a DN-X1500 mixer is at front, left.

2. Portable PAs of various flavors–L to R: Anchor Audio, dB Technologies, Peavey, Phonic, Soundtech.

3. Vestax prototype turntable/mixer combo gets a workout.

it immediately. PVDJ's DAI (Digital Audio Interface) introduced a new approach to integrated software/hardware DJ music playback. With an intuitive interface and precise auto-beat-location capability, it's sure to attract some attention from DJs thinking about computer-based performance. Rane hooked up with Serato to release Scratch LIVE, a software/hardware solution for turntablists, featuring an external USB audio device with mic as well as line inputs. Stanton's Final Scratch has been upgraded (V1.5) to support Mac OS X Panther and Windows 2000/XP operating systems, along with Linux.

In the wider world of digital recording and performance, Apple jumped into the fray with a massive release of multiple audio/video recording software titles, based on Emagic's Logic software. DJ-specific titles are sure to follow. Arturia upgraded its module-based sequencer/sampler/synth suite, Storm, to version 3.0. Cakewalk showcased the latest versions of the Sonar DAW and its module-based suite, Project5. M-Audio and Ableton released Live 3, an upgrade of a multi-platform program that gives an increased level of sample editing control. Spectrasonics gave attendees a preview of its upcoming Stylus RMX Groove Module, a virtual instrument designed for remixing and recording.

Karaoke

Alesis showed the PlayMate Vocalist, a powerful vocal remover and microphone processor with a built-in CD player. Audio 2000S brought another full helping of new karaoke products to the show. Especially notable was the AKJ7804 Singer's Power IV all-in-one unit. VocoPro showed off its 250-watt Twister II rental system and professional, 2000-watt Club-8000 system.

Cases/Bags/Stands/etc

Gator Cases showed regular and powered versions of the Pop-Up console, with convenient tilting top racks. Gemini's 2-5-2 offered a solidly built combo/slant rack option for DJ gear. While celebrating 20 years of producing durable and functional cases, Grundorf introduced the MixStation™ portable table, featuring unique height-adjustable folding legs. For those choosing the new Denon tabletop players, Odyssey offered the exclusive FRDNX155000 coffin along with a host of other innovative designs. SKB's latest roto-molded DJ rack, the 106DJ Station, was on display.

For those looking to protect their speaker investments, Bomber Bags displayed a large selection of speaker covers. Gemini released a new family of DJ bags (PB, EB and SB Series) with a whole bunch of different colors and configurations. (See It's Hot for further info.) In the realm of stands, the quest for easier set-up was met by a number of manufacturers. AKG, Hercules Stands (Kaman), and Ultimate Support all featured their own one-hand height adjusters on various mic stands, while Peak Stands demonstrated an easy-locking clamp as an alternative to screw-in speaker stand adjusters.

Lighting

In the lighting arena, American DJ's AccuSpot 250 and DJ Spot 250 intelligent moving head effect were highlights, along with a growing selection of LED products (see It's Hot for one example), and affordable fog and bubble machines. Moving further into the mobile lighting arena, Behringer unveiled the rackmountable Eurolight BLM-240 controller. 3-D Magic (textured gobo projector) and DJ Squeeze (contractible gobo projector; see It's Hot for more) represented CHAUVET's endeavors to find some unique approaches to lighting fixture design. LED technology also graced the CHAUVET booth. The Power Spot 250 from Elation combined a bright moving head fixture with a red laser. The new kid on the block, Eliminator Lighting introduced itself to the industry with its first product line. LSC's DMX Programmer packed 64-channels of intelligent lighting control into a road-worthy 4.5-pound package, while the SC 816 combined 8-channel non-DMX, strobe, fog and chase controls in one unit. Martin's latest Mania gobo units, the DC-1 and 2, added different liquid textures to the company's growing DJ line. MBT Lighting and Sound demonstrated the Gobosync, a linkable gobo projector (up to 12 units) to its extensive selection of affordable lighting. Continuing its expansion in the lighting market, Odyssey unveiled the Li500 Phantom 250 moving head, among many other products. Omnisistem broadened its selection of affordable laser products with the Stinger 1 Series, including green, red and blue models. The Pilot 250 was the latest in its intelligent moving head line.

...And believe it or not, that's just a small sampling of the gear showcased at the 2004 Winter NAMM show. Look for reviews of the hottest products in upcoming issues of *Mobile Beat*.

There was a trend this year toward self-contained PA systems.

1. Gemini's DSP-1 is ready to transport your sound.

2. Davey Dave gets some face time with TASCAM's TT-M1 vinyl/CD adapter.

3. What audio developments will this century bring?

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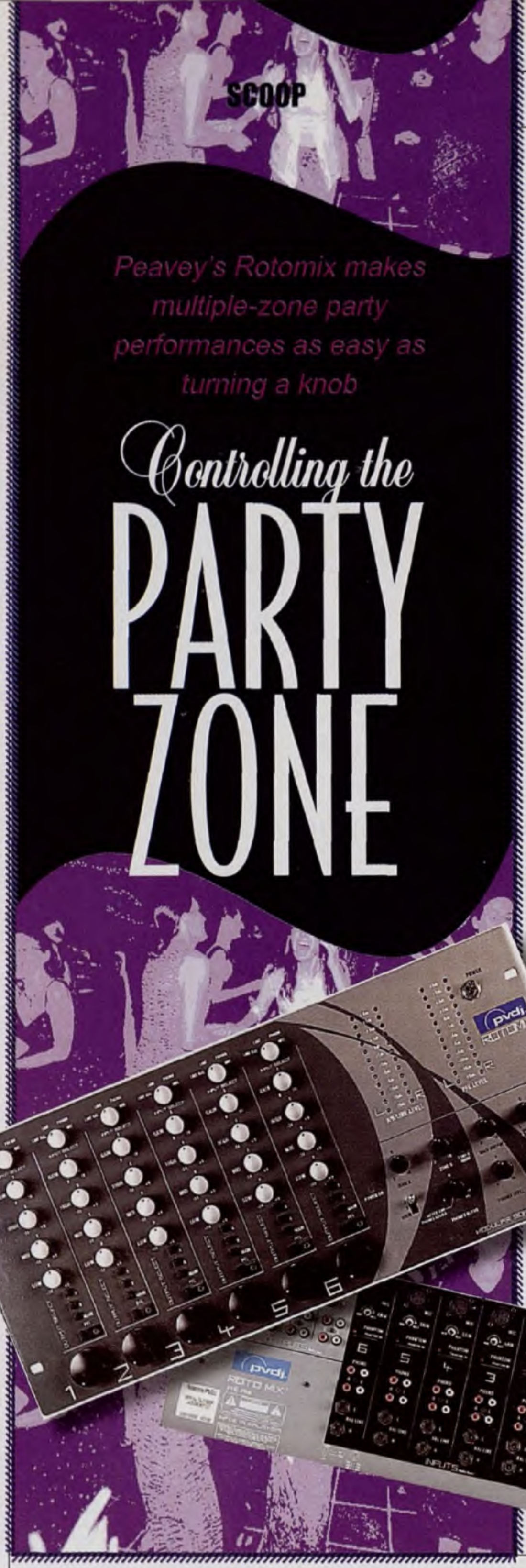

By Jammin' Jim Kerins

The Peavey Rotomix appears to be designed primarily as a club installation DJ mixer, but also promises to fit a wide variety of mixing needs. The dance club environment actually requires the unit to meet some very challenging audio performance and flexibility requirements. My job is to see if the Rotomix is up to dealing with these complex challenges. Let's apply some AC, rotate some knobs, and see what happens...

Sizzling Strips of Sound

Out of the carton and onto the desk, this 19", five-rackspace metal box is dressed in a contemporary, yet not overdone gray and silver graphic treatment. At first glance, the mixer appears to have standard functions, however, closer examination reveals a feature-packed unit.

Each of the Rotomix's six channel strips boasts selectable inputs, including line, balanced line, phono, and XLR mic. The multi-strip configuration is borrowed from typical recording- and concert-type mixing "desks" (as the studious English call them) and helps reduce crosstalk between channels. Gain control knobs facilitate matching whatever source you want to throw at the mixer. Another unique feature of the Rotomix is how its three-band EQ operates. Whereas most EQs boost and attenuate in equal amounts, the Rotomix's frequency controls boost 9dB and attenuate 24dB, allowing for the ever –popular "frequency kill" effect. Channel volume is controlled with big, smooth rotary knobs.

Any combination of input/output monitoring via headphones or meters is just a switch or dial away. Three push buttons direct output to one, or all three of the mixer's zones. Lighted PFL buttons let you listen to individual channels through headphones. You can also visually set the gain level via meters. The uncluttered main control section features dual, assignable VU meters, lit by 12-segment LEDs.

Connector Crazy

The Rotomix has a well laid-out and labeled back panel, which is packed with an impressive array of output and input connectors. The six main input channels will facilitate connecting just about any piece of gear you have. This includes balanced 1/4", stereo RCA, phono RCA, and XLR mic inputs. Two professional features that separate this mixer from others are the availability of phantom power and an additional microphone gain control. The first lets you connect and use high-quality condenser microphones that require power from the board. (How's that for a killer-sounding karaoke show?) The second gives you precise signal matching control over all of the inputs.

The main output section is where the Rotomix sends your hot mixes out to the rest of the world—or at least the rest of the club. Each of the three zones includes a pair of balanced outputs, and two pairs of unbalanced output connectors. This provides much flexibility in routing your mixes to other rooms or recorders. Crisp screen-printing makes the back panel easy to navigate. Even if you forget to read the manual (like you've ever read a manual before), getting connected is simple on this versatile mixer.

Soundcheck

My first step was to check out the basic audio functions. With two CD players, a microphone, and high-quality speakers connected,

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we were ready to go. My immediate impression was that Peavey didn't skimp on the electronics. The mic inputs had plenty of gain, and the vocals sounded great through this system. Sampling several tracks yielded a desirable non-coloration of audio output. The onboard EQ, with "soft-boost," nicely tailored the sound to match the speaker system. The headphone output was clear and strong. In short order I had a handle on using the two assignable VU meters, which helped me accurately adjust all input and output signals. All controls were smooth, and responsive. Unlike lesser mixers, once you turn a knob, or adjust the frequency there is real and immediate feedback from the machine. All my initial critical listening tests resulted in high fidelity, combined with a feel that the unit was built to last.

In the Party Zone(s)

Where the Rotomix excels is in its ability to route completely different mixes to its three stereo outputs. Because the Jammin' Jim arsenal of equipment is quite extensive, I was able to simulate, to my neighbors' displeasure, a nightclub with several audio zones. I actually used the Rotomix as an excuse to have a party, in order to exploit its zone features. This is how I set up my "club:"

- Main mix output: "Club Basement"
- Output A: "Hot Tub Club" zone
- Output B: "Smokers' Lounge" zone (outdoors)

Did you know that if you have a party and promise your DJ friends free booze and lots of girls they will help mix for free? Club Basement featured a big sound system with subwoofers. My other two virtual clubs utilized powered speakers. Since the Rotomix includes balanced outputs I was able to easily run long cables to feed strong signals to the distant speaker setups.

Zone Home

After loading up the Rotomix with several CD players, MP3 players, satellite music, and microphones, the party test was on. In Club Basement we were spinning the latest dance mixes to the thorough enjoyment of our young coed partygoers. To the Smokers' Lounge we routed the MP3 player, with a pre-recorded mix of '60s cocktail jazz, because that's what smokers like. My favorite, the Hot Tub Club, received its mix via the satellite music system...of course we chose the Caribbean channel to complement the bubbling hot water and tropical fruit drinks.

During the course of the party, we were able to monitor all of the separate mixes by using our headphones. The assignment buttons were great for making announcements individually or collectively to any of the different rooms. As the party progressed, the dancing and partying shifted from Club Basement, to the Hot Tub Club. This required us to cancel the sedate Caribbean mix and route our high-energy club music to the now above-legal-capacity hot tub zone. The party and the mixer were both complete successes.

The Rotomix is a fine performer. Its solidly built, smooth-functioning electronics, combined with ease-of-use and flexibility, rate this as a must to check out. Peavey has been building solid electronics for years, and there is every indication that this mixer should provide a long service life. •

To ask questions, make comments or to RSVP for the next party, e-mail Jim at jkerins@rochester.rr.com.

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...in a Practical Package

THE MATRIX 1000 FROM B-52 PACKS POWER AND CONVENIENCE INTO AN ACTIVE SPEAKER SYSTEM

By Tony Barthel

There was a movie out awhile back called *Other People's Money*, with Danny DeVito, in which he spoke of the joys of living life with, well, other people's money. This article could be titled "Other People's Speakers," because it's kind of the same thing, only with toys, er, professional gear provided by a manufacturer for exhaustive testing.

The specific speakers that we were asked to put to the torture test are part of B-52's new Matrix 1000 system. The Matrix 1000 is actually a self-contained sound system comprised of three speaker cabinets: a pair of two-way speakers and a subwoofer. The trio of sound-reproducing weaponry is driven by a three-way amplifier built into the subwoofer, so that all you need beyond the B-52 system to get the party started is an audio signal, some cables, and stands. Best of all, the folks at B-52 actually considered Mobile DJs when creating this system—it's designed to pack up nicely and easily. But more on that later.

Configured for Impact

To start things off, you send an audio signal to the back/bottom of the subwoofer, where B-52 has installed a three-channel, proprietary 700-watt amplifier. Four hundred watts of this power is directed to a 15" B-52 subwoofer in the amplifier/subwoofer cabinet and 150 watts is directed to each of the two-way cabinets. A static crossover point is built into the system at 120 Hz.

The two-way speakers each contain a 10" main driver and a .75" titanium diaphragm. These are connected to the amplifier via Speakon-outfitted cables.

Okay, so enough of how it's set up, I hear you saying, how does it thump a party?

To give the system a hearty workout, I brought it to a holiday function I've done for five years straight. The guests at this manufacturing operation are predominantly Hispanic, so salsa, cumbia and merengue provide the main source of musical entertainment. Oh, and by the way, I should mention that each year the celebration is actually held in the manufacturing facility, so there are plenty of hard surfaces and open air—the perfect place to torture-test an audio system.

During the course of the event, several guests made positive comments about the speakers. (Although for some reason they kept calling me "essay." Maybe they knew I was going to write an essay about the speakers.) My perception was that the highs were very strong and the bass was quite sufficient, but my tin ear would have appreciated a stronger mid-range. While there are gain controls for each of the three channels, there are no equalization settings on the speakers.

In order to thoroughly test the speakers, I invited several other gear-heads over for free beer and a blast session. Again, we heard comments about the modesty of the mid-range, but overall, the package was given the thumbs-up. And everyone's hair was thoroughly blown back.

Mobile Consideration

One of the most nifty things about this package is that it's actually designed to be portable. Someone at B-52 must be a Mobile DJ. When the performance is over you just disconnect all the cables from the bass unit, flip it onto its back (onto its built-in wheels), put the two tops onto the face of the subwoofer, strap it all together and throw the cover over the whole enchilada. The reverse curvature of the subwoofer grille perfectly matches the curvature of the other two speakers. The whole thing fits together quite well. Even the strap to attach it all together and the bag to cover it are included.

About the only mobile disadvantage I can think of is that the entire speaker package weighs in at a hefty 165 pounds, when strapped together. If you're not used to hefting this much weight into a truck, it might be an embarrassing surprise when you find you need to elicit the help of a party guest. Yeah, yeah, I know—I should work out.

Multiplying the Matrix

B-52 calls the speaker system "Matrix" because several of these trios can be linked via XLR cables. You could Matrix yourself one heck of a sound system by tying several of these systems together.

With three speakers in a (relatively) easy-to-schlep package, B-52 has created a winning combination. And, apparently, this smart design hasn't missed DJs' radar screens, as they've been flying out the door at such a rate that B-52 is working overtime to meet the demand. •

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THE ILLUMINATED DJ

LED It Be

HARNESSING THE SMOOTH POWER OF THE DIODE FOR DJ LIGHTING

LEDs are the hottest ticket in the entertainment industry (also the coolest, as you'll see), and they can open a world of possibilities that will help you maintain your competitive edge. These small yet powerful diodes are taking over the industry because of their many advantages over conventional light bulbs and the sheer magic of their bright, endless color palette. From the power indicators on our computers and DJ mixers to the extravagant displays down the Strip in Las Vegas, LEDs are everywhere—and they are here to stay.

By Barry Abrams

THE LOWDOWN ON DIODES

LED stands for Light Emitting Diode. Unlike incandescent lamps, an LED generates very little heat because it doesn't have a filament that requires heat in order to glow. Instead, LEDs produce light by way of the forward-biased movement of electrons in a semi-conductor material that releases photons. (High school physics review: a *photon* is the smallest amount of electromagnetic radiation, usually in reference to the visible light range, and it behaves like both a particle and a wave.) Therefore, you have the advantage of low heat, low energy consumption and a much longer lifespan—up to 100,000 hours.

From a DJ's perspective, these are obviously powerful reasons for investing in this new technology. PAR cans, moonflowers, effects—anything that operates with a standard lamp will be impacted by LED technology. It is the wave of the future and it is extremely promising.

LED fixtures such as tubes, panels, cubes, curtains, dance floors, ropes, moving yokes and spheres allow you to add a new dimension to your gigs. Providing a challenge to event decorators (who often do little more than bring in centerpieces or illuminate plants with floodlights), with LED technology, you have the opportunity to add a decorative touch and turn your gig into a grand event. You can use lighted LED coasters to illuminate glasses, bottles, vases and objects, adding subtle drama to your event. Or place LED spheres on tables instead of flower pieces and you'll have an attention-getter that's also a great mood-setter. What bride wouldn't love entering the ballroom with her husband under a halo of flowing colors?

INCREASE YOUR MIXING CONTROL...OVER COLOR

To understand how LEDs are used in the entertainment industry, you must first understand RGB color mixing. RGB stands for red, green and blue, the three main diode colors used to create an infinite number of other colors. We all remember mixing paint colors as kids to get new shades. We mixed red and blue paint to get purple and different amounts of red and blue created different shades of purple or even brown. When we download JPEG images, we are also looking at the results of color mixing—in this case RGB mixing. Just like in your childhood experiments, mixing red, blue and green in different amounts creates a multitude of different colors and creates the JPEG image. Similarly, televisions and computer monitors use pixels to

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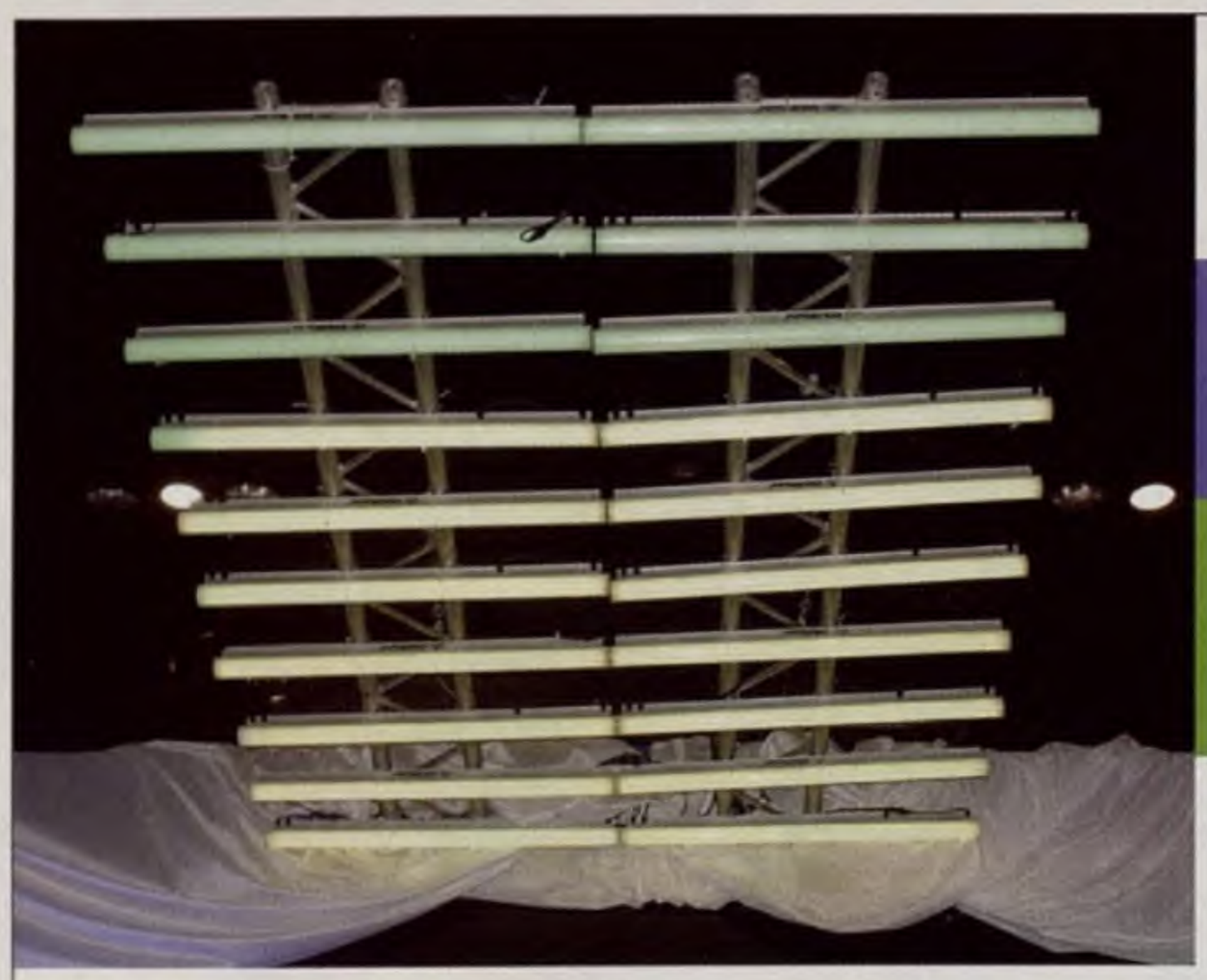

LED It Be

PAR cans, moonflowers, effects—anything that operates with a standard lamp will be impacted by LED technology.

change and mix colors to create the images that you see. The more pixels, the sharper the image. In LED units, mixing red, green and blue to varying degrees allows endless color combinations and a wide variety of applications, from decorative ambiance to dramatic outdoor signage.

All LEDs are not created equal. They come in different sizes and packaging with varying brightness, angle of distribution, and life spans ranging from 10,000 to 100,000 hours, depending on quality. Big is usually better, but don't be fooled by those claiming to provide you with larger LEDs. When buying LED products, the key question is quantity. A larger quantity of small LEDs will provide a fuller, better flow of effect than a few large ones. Think back to the pixels in your television or computer screen.

THE IMPACT OF LED

Let's consider some products that have been around for some time and see how they can be or have been improved by LED technology.

We've all used ropelights to decorate our booths. It doesn't take long for discoloration to set in, causing the lights to look old and dim. In contrast, LED ropelights will look great year after year because they don't produce the heat that causes the discoloration in conventional ropelights. They will last a lot longer: about 12 years, on average, compared to 2 years for incandescent bulbs.

Fiber optic lighting is another product category that comes to mind. Many of us use fiber optic backdrops or displays. Their color-changing capabilities are wonderful, but their optical lenses are made of glass, which is prone to damage. An LED backdrop will give you the same benefits, plus increased durability.

When it comes to creative flexibility, LED fixtures such as tubes or panels are really hard to beat. Tubes, for example, operate via controllers that allow control over a myriad of patterns, graphics, and color possibilities. They can be linked to achieve a seamless flow of colors or turbulent color cascades. You have the potential for chases, flows, flashes, sweeps, and various types of color mixing. Put them end-to-end to create a rushing waterfall or a subtle trickling stream; install them on a floor (they should be sturdy—people will go wild on them); or mount them on walls to create an unforgettable retro ambience. You can even put your company's logo, an event message or the guest of honor's name on them.

Many fixtures, as we know them now, are being completely revamped to accept this new technology. Wouldn't an LED moving yoke wash be cool? Already been done. At a recent show in Europe, I spotted—and flipped over—a 16-channel DMX scanner that utilized LEDs as its light source. Pricey? Yes, but think about the flexibility in terms of colors and other benefits like low power consumption. (How would you like to run 12 fixtures on a single circuit?)

Not ready to jump into the deep end of LED technology? You can start off with the most inexpensive items: Stack up some cubes, hang a few spheres and see the response that you get. If you still hesitate to dive in, test the waters first with a few coasters, magnets, or pins that you can personalize as giveaways and see how people will dance to win the prize! Partygoers love flashy things and nothing flashes brighter than LEDs. They'll give you the edge over the competition. As I heard as a young child on the Carousel of Progress at Disney World, "The future is around you—don't just watch the parade."

Open your mind to this new technology...and enjoy a new wealth of creative possibilities.•

Barry Abrams is CHAUVET's product development manager. He can be reached via e-mail, at barry@chauvetlighting.com. You can also fax your comments, questions and suggestions for future columns to his attention at 954-929-5560.

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How to Cover More Area with Your Lighting Gear

By Toby Velasquez

You just bought this new, eye-popping lighting effect, and now you're using it for the first time at a dance in the local high school gymnasium. But when you turn it on, it doesn't create the explosive, 4th of July fireworks you pictured—it's more like a flickering Christmas candle. The beams aren't nearly as bright as you thought, and their coverage area seems to have shrunk, spanning only a small section of the room. Did someone switch effects on you? No, what happened is that although your effect may have looked brilliant and wide-ranging in the store, it's gotten "lost" in the much larger proportions of the school gym.

Unfortunately, many lighting fixtures geared toward DJs' mobility and budget needs are designed to fit the dimensions of small clubs—not gymnasiums, wedding halls and the like. So how do you get your lighting effects to cover one of these larger venues?

Happily, it doesn't take expensive, weighty theatrical fixtures to light up a large dance floor or banquet hall. Just by choosing gear smartly, knowing about some of the amazing new technology that's out there, and using what you have optimally, you can fill up a room with lighting effects—without emptying your bank account (no matter how large the former, or how small the latter!) Here are some strategies that will help you gain maximum area coverage from your lighting fixtures and budget.

Happily, it doesn't take expensive, weighty theatrical fixtures to light up a large dance floor or banquet hall.

Focus on Fog

Like a magician's tricks, creating the perception of wider lighting coverage often involves "smoke and mirrors." One of the easiest and most economical ways to spread out your coverage is to use fog with your effects. The opacity of the fog will give the illusion of a wider illumination area and will enhance almost every type of lighting effect. For the most effective results, use a fogger that produces low-lying fog, rather than one that shoots haze higher into the air. This will create a dramatic, theatrical-type look as the fog rolls out near the floor. Then as the fog gradually rises, it will start amplifying the lights, providing a 3D effect that fills up the room. Also, keep in mind that a little fog goes a long way, so there's no need to over-saturate the room with smoke effects.

Mirror, Mirror on the Wall (...and Floor...and Ceiling)

The type of mirror a fixture uses can make a big difference in its coverage, too. Barrel-type mirrors are better than flat mirrors for illuminating bigger rooms, because they produce four or five beams at once, multiplying the lighted area. Fixtures with multi-mirror dishes are another good choice, because the light reflects off the different mirrors, creating more beams from a single lamp source. In recent times, a lot of multi-mirror dish effects have come out on the market that are comparably priced to standard flat mirror fixtures, so they provide a good value for DJs who want to cover more ground.

The "Beam Angle" Angle

Beam angle is one area where many DJs make the mistake of thinking that what looks good in the store will have the same impact in a club or other entertainment venue. Fixtures with smaller beam angles of, say, 10˚ to 12˚ may appear to produce brighter beams when demonstrated

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by a salesperson, but when you move them into a more cavernous banquet hall, they suddenly look like a tiny spot on the floor. That's because the smaller the angle of the beam, the narrower the area it covers. So the "sharpness" of a 10° to 12° effect won't make much of a splash in a large room. For this reason, I recommend going with a wider beam angle of 15° to 18°—you're still getting a bright beam of light, but you're also getting the coverage you need.

Variety Can Spice Up Coverage

We tend to notice changes in the type of sensory stimuli we're receiving more than different intensity levels. (Think of the "loud" silence created when a steady tapping sound ceases.) So, varying your lighting effects is another trick you can use to maximize their impact and create the impression of greater coverage. For example, simply changing the speed of a moving effect can grab the attention of onlookers in all parts the room. You might want to take a renewed look at some traditional inexpensive DJ effects, such as rotating balls, which have now been upgraded to offer variable speed and other options that give them more variety for the buck.

Multiply Coverage with Multi-Head Packages

Multi-head systems that consist of several effects (usually sets of four) packaged together with their own controller are another good choice for DJs who want to expand their lighting coverage. By buying such a package, you get a much better value than purchasing units individually. Plus, with multi-heads you can spread out your effects to fill all parts of a room and still have all the movement coordinated. To cover the most area, the optimal positioning of a four-head system is to put two heads on each side of your DJ setup. Check out some of the really compact multi-head systems that have come out on the market. Some of these mini units offer a surprising amount of brightness for their size. They're great for Mobile DJs, because you can set them on standard tripods, without having to worry about carrying around heavy trussing.

Move Ahead with Moving Heads

For absolute maximum coverage from a single unit, nothing beats a moving head fixture. With a moving head fixture, the entire yoke rotates, not just the mirror, providing a full 360° of coverage and amazing visual depth. By positioning a moving head on the center of the ceiling, you can have beams shooting out to all areas of the room, looking like they're actually in 3D. In the past, moving heads were somewhat expensive, but as with many developing technologies, the price has come down considerably. You might be surprised at the affordability of some of the newer moving head lights developed specifically for DJs. Also, if you're thinking about buying a moving head, consider that it can also be used as a followspot for stage shows—so you're getting a really versatile fixture and good value for your dollar.

Consider the (Light) Source

Fixtures with brighter lamps, such as discharge lamps, are also coming down in price, and they're a great way to amplify your visual presence in a large room. Even though discharge lamps are still more expensive than halogen, we're seeing more DJs starting to get into them. Discharge lamps usually have a much longer life than halogen, say 2000 hours, so they start making economic sense when you calculate the lower lamp replacement cost. Looking a little further into the future, there are other exciting, vibrant lighting technologies that we believe will be used by DJs in the future, such as LEDs, to intensify their light shows. A curtain consisting of LED lights costs a fraction of a fiber optic curtain, yet its stunning vividness is virtually the same. With these and other technological breakthroughs on the horizon, you can say that the future looks even "brighter" when it comes to getting more coverage from DJ lighting.

Toby Velasquez is the Vice President of Product Development for the American DJ Group of Companies. Contact him at 800-322-6337 or by way of www.americandj.com. •

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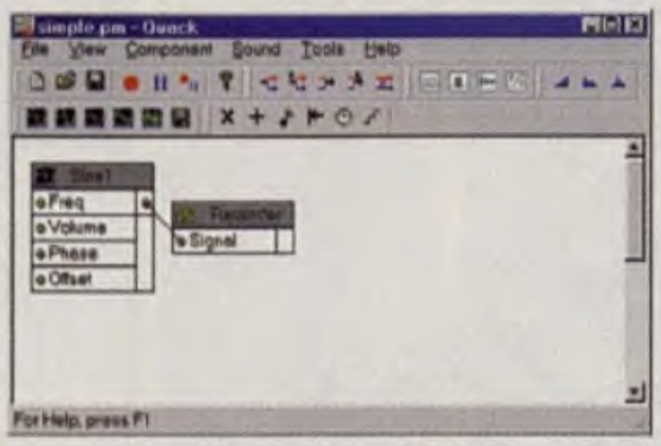

What Was That Sound?

If you've been looking for a fun and not too pricey way to add some extra flash to your mix, QUACK Sound Effects Studio lets you create your own original sound effects with an easy-to-use visual editor. Simply select basic components from the toolbar, and plug them together in any combination, and create exactly the sound you need. You can generate 16-bit, CD quality stereo sound files, in standard WAV format, that are ready to add to your digital mix. QUACK comes with nine basic sound sources that can be combined in an almost infinite number of configurations. You can use the output of one component to control another - for example you can use a slow oscillator to add vibrato to a second oscillator. A shareware demo version is available. MSRP: $49 - www.morello.co.uk/quack.htm

Take Creative Action

Jackson is DJ software that situates itself somewhere between Native Instruments' Traktor and Ableton's Live in terms of its method of music manipulation. It allows you to alter the structure of songs while playing them—parts can be repeated, skipped, paused and reversed. Tracks are automatically beat-matched and therefore always play in sync. A collection of filters and effects allows you to sculpt the sound to your liking, while a built-in recorder allows you to record your mixes without the need for additional equipment. The integrated BeatTracker analyzes the rhythmic structure of your tracks. A real-time oscilloscope and spectrum analyzer are even included for more technically minded DJs. A demo version (limited to 30 minutes playing time per session) is available. MSRP: $125 - www.jacksondj.com

Tweaking Tool

An audio editing program with a large range of high-quality audio tools and effects, Acoustica 3.0, from Acon Digital Media, includes an audio editing engine that allows unlimited undo and redo levels, fast non-destructive editing and 24- or 32-bit editing with up to a 192kHz sampling rate. You can import tracks from audio CDs and create audio CDs with your edited material without leaving the program. Acoustica has user friendly and versatile tools for quality enhancement of old LP or tape recordings. Remove stationary noise like tape hiss or let Acoustica add high frequency harmonics to dull recordings. Support for DirectX plug-ins makes it easy to extend the program with third party audio processing tools. You can download a fully functioning, 30-day trial version. MSRP: $29 - www.aconas.com

Multi-Talented Power

DJPower extends your reach beyond music into multimedia amazement

By Tony Barthel

One of the longest-lived players in the computer-based DJ software business is DJPower. The company has been a fixture for years. But while some companies have chosen to use software to replicate the dual CD player experience, DJPower has continued to set itself apart in terms of features and functionality.

The software's primary function, of course, is to play a sequence of music files, as with all computer-based music programs. However, it has grown into an integrated system with much more capability than just music playback. Today, DJPower is adept at playing music videos, projecting text messages, controlling intelligent lighting, helping you create live picture shows and much more. Recently we were given a sneak preview of the latest version of this software.

What hasn't changed is the familiar software interface. DJPower's main feature is a play list that lists the files that will be played and specifically when they'll be played. From there you can turn on hot buttons, music and video preview panes, a preview player, music list, played music list and other windows. There are a lot of different ways to utilize the software; however, the basic functions are extremely intuitive.

Lots of Eye Candy

Among the improvements are a reorganized control panel, tempo control with both MP3 files and video, a new "visualizer," and drastically improved video capability, including the ability to mix video files and add up to ten live camera feeds to the mix.

The live camera feed is definitely a feature worth noting. You can employ up to ten live cameras and switch between them. This would be useful for projecting images of the dancers enjoying themselves on your dance floor. Another powerful application would be at corporate events, where you could project the speeches being made onto a big screen. This might also be an incredible wedding add-on where you could project the bride and groom's first dance onto a large screen for all to see, or do the same for the best man's toast. Using DJPower and several inexpensive USB web cameras, one DJ can mimic what normally costs tens of thousands of dollars to produce.

Another feature that will expand your possibilities—and potentially help grow your customer base—is the "picture show" feature. During the last holiday season, I used a digital still camera to take pictures of guests at parties and, moments later, used DJPower's picture show feature to have them projected on the big screen. Essentially, I created an instant slide show of pictures taken right at the event. While this highly interactive feature does not distract guests from mingling, it still has a tremendous impact.

One of the most outstanding features is DJPower's new video mixing capability. Those who have considered projecting music videos or karaoke will be happy that they can bring all their media on hard drives and use DJPower to mix the songs. While one music video is being projected it is possible to set cue points and change

New Tech, New Site, New Tool

As the lines between different modes of entertainment continue to blur, DJs find themselves in a unique position to combine audio, visual and other aspects in exciting new ways. The Global Entertainment and Media Summit, scheduled for April 3rd and 4th, 2004, provides an opportunity for anyone involved with entertainment to get in touch with the latest technologies and ideas, as well as likeminded individuals from a variety of fields. The convergence of music, film, the Internet and other technologies is a primary theme of this conference.

To quote directly from the event's promotional materials: "The Summit was created to provide a forum for the exchange of views, ideas and contacts in the independent music, film, video and multimedia worlds of the entertainment and communications industries in a context of innovation, reinvention, and the creation of possibility for sustainable careers and a revolution in marketing and distribution."

For additional information, go to www.globalentertainmentnetwork.com.

A dedicated Web site is now online for users of Cakewalk's popular Project5 music production software. The site, www.Project5.com, was created to help electronic musicians take full advantage of the Project5 Soft Synth Workstation by providing free tutorials and tips, drum kits, sampler banks, synth presets, and groove patterns. Project5.com also provides an online community where users can exchange project files, synth patches, and patterns. Visitors can

tempo on a second video, then mix the two together. DJPower has been able to play music videos sequentially for some time, but the software now allows users to actually mix video without thousands of dollars of specific hardware. You can also fully preview a video file on the computer's monitor before sending it out to the big screen.

Being able to actually change the tempo on music files is nothing new to those who own high-end DJ CD players, but DJPower has reached a new high point by also making this feature available for video files as well. The tempo control sounds as good as those on high-quality CD players. This feature alone makes the software an incredible value, as you get more functionality than you would with most video mixing bays, yet you have much less to carry, since all the media is on hard drives.

Assume Control

Some of the elements that have continued to make DJPower unique include its 160 hot buttons and optional remote control. By using these features in tandem, it's possible to replicate the performance of a two-person show with just one DJ and the DJPower system. At a wedding, for example, you can program all the formal dance songs into hot buttons, which are also accessible via the remote control. Announce the first dance from the dance floor and then hit a button on the remote to trigger the song.

You could also utilize the hot buttons and optional Martin Light Jockey software that interfaces with DJPower to set lighting sequences with DMX-controlled lighting. With the push of a button on the wireless DJPower remote, you could change the lighting in the room, roll a video of the bride and groom or start a corporate presentation. DJPower definitely represents more than your basic digital jukebox software.

DJs who go the DJPower route are probably looking for something other than simply a way to play digital music files. Again, the remote and the features incorporated into the software make it possible to accomplish a performance that would normally take several people working in tight harmony. Instead, using this digital program as the hub, you can craft an exciting multimedia experience.

Digital Testimonial

By utilizing all the advanced features DJPower has to offer, I have been able to secure more high-scale corporate events, thus bolstering my own bottom line. While it's true that DJPower is not a tool for those who choose to stand behind a sound console and beat mix songs, it is a great tool for DJs who are looking to create an interactive performance without the burden of training an assistant. In my particular case, I worked up to much of this after using DJPower simply as a music playback solution. From there, I added video, then, recently, added karaoke and began using the picture show quite a bit.

DJPower offers a number of software packages and software/hardware combinations. Check out www.djpower.com for complete information.

System Requirements:

- PentiumIII® 400 kHz or faster processor (600 MHz or higher is recommended for video mixing)
- Windows®98, ME, NT 4.0 (not for the video option), 2000, XP
- 128 MB RAM (512 MB RAM or higher is recommended for video mixing)
- 14 MB free disk space (program only)
- Free disk space for music and videos
- Minimum 8x CD-ROM drive (15-32 recommended for faster extraction)
- 16-bit (high-color) and 800x600 graphics
- 16-bit duplex sound card with bass /treble control

also read interviews and features with music technology leaders and Project5 artists.

Project5's interface combines pattern-based and live-performance sequencing, with powerful looping tools. It also comes loaded with synths and samplers, creative effects, and professional sample content. Combined with its support for industry-standard effects (DX, VST), synths (DXi, VSTi), samples (Akai, Kurzweil, LM4, SF, and more), and audio hardware (ASIO, Direct Sound, WDM) users can customize and expand their workstation to meet their needs.

If you are interested in the potential of Apple's iPod as a DJ tool, surf on over to an interesting Web site—www.methodshop.com. A recently posted article by J. Love, "Goodbye Turntables—The New DJ Revolution: MP3Js (and iPods)" describes the growing popularity of the iPod as a kind of everyman's DJ device in British clubs. In the article, one club's acceptance of the new technology is described as follows: "On noWax nights, MP3Js bring their iPods and wait for the automated projector above the DJ booth to flash their number. Then they plug in and mix three songs back-to-back against another MP3J. noWax is a public competition very similar to 'rap battles,' a la Eminem's movie *8 Mile*. Whoever mixes the best set of songs and doesn't get booed off stage wins...People who never normally get to play tunes in bars or clubs are getting a taste of the glory, and they love it!"

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A few years ago, it would have been very unusual for a DJ to have a computer at a performance. Today, customers are actually becoming aware of the technology and have begun asking about it. Many DJs are now including computer technology in their arsenal of gear. Some are employing it as the centerpiece of their music playback solution.

DJs Update Their Attitudes Toward Computer-centered Performance

"Like the progression from Edison cylinders to discs, I see that 'going digital' is the wave of the future," says Scott McKinney of Solid Sound (Colorado). "It's the logical progression of music playback."

We talked to DJs across the country to see what their experience has been with the computerized digital solution. In almost every case, the DJs who have tested the waters of digital music playback have jumped in with both feet. However, not all DJs who have gone digital have fully embraced the technology. Some use it as a supplemental playback source, with many keeping CD players or other more traditional playback solutions as part of their systems.

Dedicated to Digital:

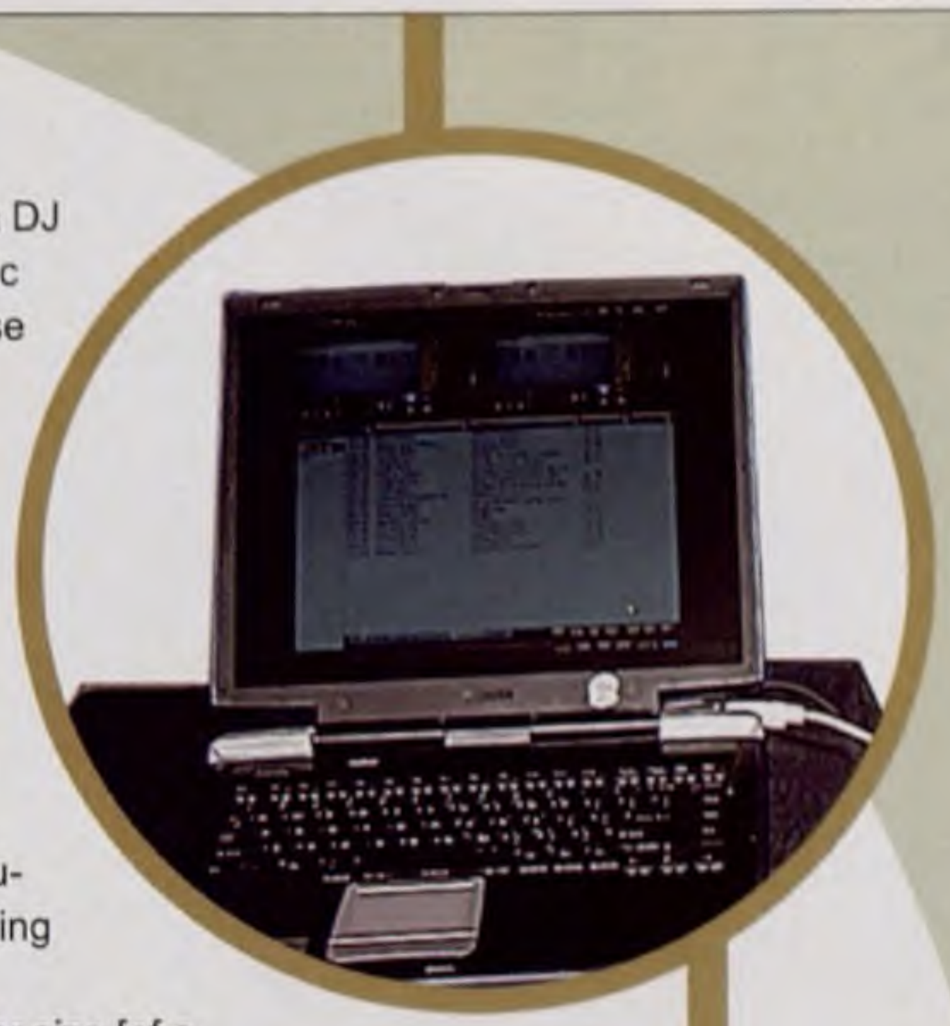
DJs & COMPUTER DJing

By Tony Barthel

Why Make the Segue?

Rick Hodgkins of Sound Stream Express (Massachusetts) went on a DJ cruise several years ago and noticed that the whole cruise ship music playback system was computer-based. "When I saw this on the cruise ship I had to check it out." He indicated that the move to computer-based music playback was "...really simple, much to my surprise."

Robbie Briton got into computer-based music playback back in the days of the original Napster service. Being the co-owner of a music store, Briton was very interested in maintaining legal copies of music. He had a new pre-release of a Limp Bizkit CD and went to a stereo store to show it off. One of the kids there said, "Oh, I've already downloaded the whole album." That got Briton interested in finding out more about computer-based playback.



At first he brought along his laptop to gigs as a supplemental music source, but at one point he finally asked himself, "Why am I bringing CDs?" Now he goes completely CD-less.

"I've carried my share of 100-pound cases of CDs, so the smaller size [of a DJ-ready computer] is very much a benefit," adds McKinney. "I also don't have customers looking through CDs. All the requests that are made I can put into a wait list."

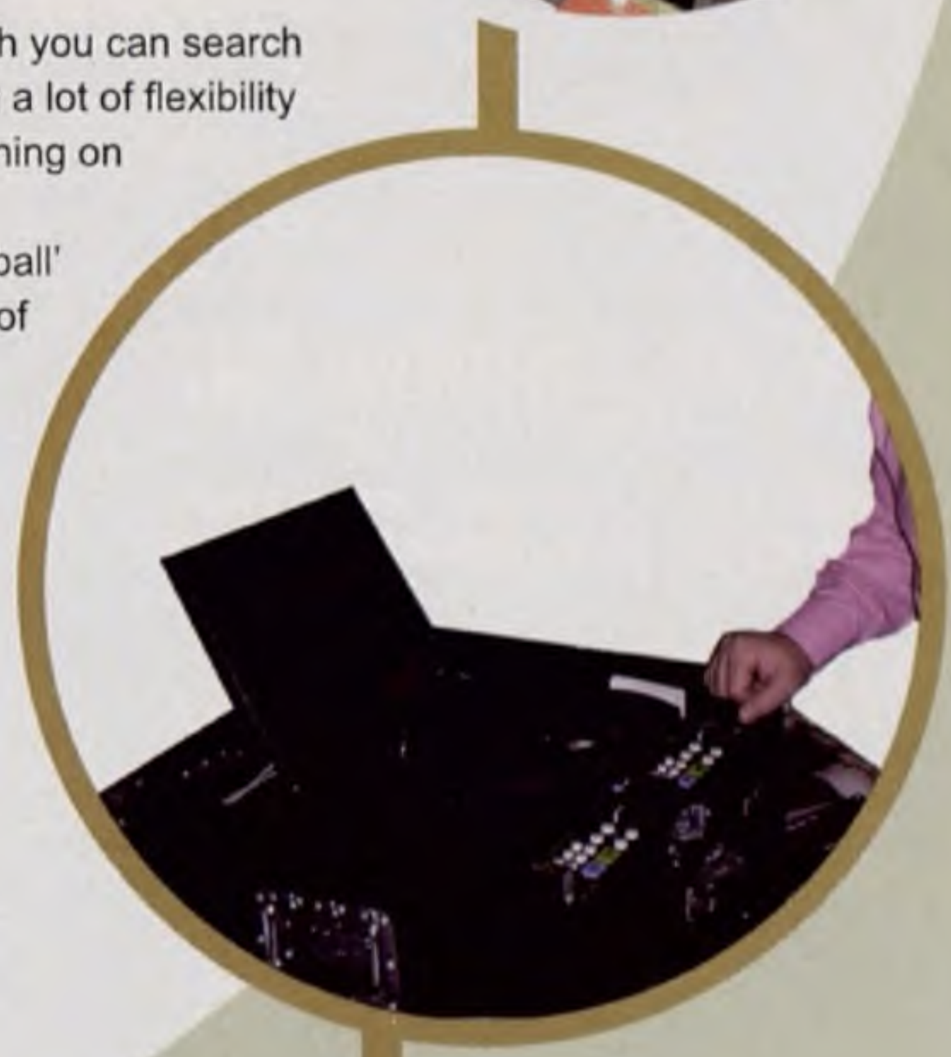
McKinney also relates an experience with a bride who complained that he didn't play a few of her specific requests. In a vivid demonstration of another DJ software benefit, he printed out a play list and showed her not only that the song was played, but also exactly *when* it was played.

"I don't have to worry about forgetting music or having a version that's scratched," says Ron Ralph of A DJ To Go in Pensacola, Florida. "Computers are the wave of the future...if it can make my job easier, and I can mingle with the guests—that's a driving force. I also don't have to flip through a songbook: I can make an immediate change with just a couple of clicks.

Almost universally, the reason DJs moved to digital music playback was for convenience. "It makes a one-man show appear to be a two-man show," notes Ryan Burger of ProDJ.com, who also maintains a thriving DJ business in Des Moines, Iowa. "You can do so much more when you let the thing go and [you do] not have to be back there."

According to Hodgkins, "The biggest benefit is the speed in which you can search and load a song and the ability to alter a wait list rotation. It gives you a lot of flexibility at your fingertips. You can see what's in the lineup and what's happening on the dance floor and you can alter that in a split second."

"The computer makes it more likely that someone will carry 'oddball' songs because it doesn't add more weight to do so," adds Todd Sun of DJRak.



Back Up and Stay Legal

As with any DJ technology, professional computer-based DJs have also thought about the possibility of equipment failure. The range of back-up solutions ranges from CD players with limited libraries to complete second computer systems. Surprisingly few of the DJs we spoke with had any horror stories about computer mishaps.

One of the big differences between CD player technology and a computer configuration is the fact that so much can be done to modify the latter. That is where some DJs have gotten into trouble. Those who tend not to mess with things seem to have better experiences than those who are always making system-level changes.

"In four years, we've never had a crash," boasts McKinney.

Todd Sun of DJRak, a company that specializes in building DJ computer solutions observed, "The operating systems are now stable. The hardware is amazing. We've had systems fall down stairs and out of the back of trucks and we haven't had any failures as a result."

When it comes to duplicating music for safety as well as convenience, Burger points out that, legally, you can't just add additional systems by copying hard drives. "You have to have the CDs for each system." Just having a computer as part of your playback solution doesn't absolve you of the responsibility of purchasing a music library.

So, what about the new "pay-per-song" services that are out there? "Now that there's iTunes and legal Napster, I've been filling in holes (in my music library) that I don't have on CD but where I don't want to buy the whole album for one song," explains McKinney.

Laptop vs. Rack Box

Many of the DJs we spoke with were not necessarily computer literate when they started, but described themselves now as more "computer-aware." Although many "early-adopters" of the technology had computer backgrounds, many of the DJs stepping into the technology today describe themselves as only casual computer users.

Surprisingly, we found a big division between those who use laptops and those who use other computer configurations to play their music. "I don't use a laptop any more, because it just doesn't look like professional gear," says Briton. "You can go to Wal-Mart and buy something and throw it away when it tears up, but I've stuck with pro gear."

"We don't think laptops are a good idea," agrees Sun. "If you go that path, you're going to end up with a table full of wires and connected boxes. Some aren't designed for this type of duty-cycle."

Then there are those who swear by laptops for music playback. Personal preference plays a big role in the decision. Everyone is in agreement, however, that it is important to employ quality sound cards and fast, reliable hard drives no matter what form factor one chooses.

Changing Perceptions

One of the most interesting aspects of the current computer DJing scene is customer response. Almost universally, the computer-based DJs we spoke to have encountered many of the same responses. "Wow, that's cool! Do you download all your songs?" is a familiar question asked of DJs who have gone this route.

At one point he finally asked himself, "Why am I bringing CDs?" Now he goes completely CD-less.

During the selling process, few computer-based DJs mention the fact that they use a computer for playback. Some DJs report that many people still perceive computers to be unreliable, so they obviously don't try to highlight their technology with those clients. Still, some customers are beginning to ask if a computer will be used, and a few even understand the benefits of computer music performance.

"Most customers are in awe when they see my system—particularly owners of venues," reports Hodgkins.

Growing Pains

"I think the industry needs to start behaving like a bigger business," laments Briton. He cites continual lapses in good customer service from several of the software providers he's purchased from. This is a fairly widespread complaint among many of the people we spoke with.

"I'm a hands-on guy," says Ron Ralph, "It's hard for me to read something and follow directions." He hopes that the industry will improve its instructional process, perhaps with videos or seminars at DJ conferences.

Edward Holtzman of Tampa Bay, Florida, was an early-adopter of computer-based music playback, having started five years ago. "It took almost two years to move to computer because of the increases in hard drive sizes and the availability of good encoding software. In the past, a four-gigabyte drive was a big deal and it was so difficult to store a lot of song information."

"There are a lot of good products out there right now," reports Holtzman. He also notes how the manufacturers of more traditional DJ systems seem to be moving to MP3 playback systems. Already several companies who manufacture dual CD players are building those systems to recognize MP3-encoded discs.

Burger concurs: "There are already MP3 players now. There will be a lot more support in the near future. Eventually, there will be hard drives instead of CD players."

More on the Floor

DJRak's Todd Sun describes business as "...great. The market's taking off!" His advice for anyone planning the move toward computer DJing is to "...download the trial versions (of the computer-based software solutions) and choose the one that's most natural to you—that's the one to consider."

Of his decision to utilize the computer solution, Ron Ralph says, "...I don't know what I'd do without it. I can be out on the dance floor—I don't have to be worried about changing CDs. I can be out there helping people or dancing." •

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Mobile MARKETING and the 5 Ps of Marketing

An excerpt from the original Mobile DJ "manual," Spinnin' 2000

By Robert A. Lindquist and Dennis E. Hampson

Before *Mobile Beat* there was *Spinnin'*. With its extensive coverage of practical information on how to set up and run a successful mobile DJ service, Robert Lindquist's first edition of what would later be called *Spinnin 2000'* (originally published in 1987) was an enormous success and the first book of its kind. Last updated in 1998, and now published by ProDJ Publishing, it is still quite popular. It has helped many DJs get their businesses off the ground. If you haven't read *Spinnin'* yet, you are definitely missing out. The following is a taste of what's inside. It is the first in a series of excerpts from ProDJ Publishing titles that we'll be providing for the readers of *Mobile Beat*.

Mobile Marketing (and the Five Ps of Marketing)

How quickly you get your first Mobile DJ gigs will depend totally on how hard you try and how much time and effort you expend. It's also important to know some basic marketing concepts.

Marketing is the procedure of finding a buyer for any product or service. It's "how we compete." For example, at harvest time, a farmer decides to sell apples at a roadside stand. The farmer's success will depend on how well he goes about designing a marketing program based on the following criteria:

1 - Positioning. *Who buys apples?*
The best apples in the world are of no interest to people who only eat oranges.

2 - Pricing. *Are the apples a good value?*
Regardless of quality, there's a limit to what most people will pay for apples.

3 - Promotion. *How do you attract apple buyers?*
Once the farmer thinks he knows who will buy his apples and how much they will pay he must decide how to get the message out to the public.

4 - Packaging. *Do the apples look good?*
Even people who like apples at the right price won't buy them if they don't look enticing.

5 - Performance. *Were the apples worth the money?*
After a knowledgeable apple connoisseur has eaten one of the farmer's apples, will he tell his friends about the exceptional deal he got, or tell them to stay away?

How Do the Five Ps of Marketing Apply to a Mobile DJ Entertainment Service?

1 Positioning. *Are you appealing to the right people the right way?*

The market for Mobile DJs is wide and varied—not all DJs pursue the wedding and family party market. In positioning your DJ service, you will determine exactly what part of the overall market you wish to attack. For example, you may decide to specialize in entertaining primarily at high schools or colleges because no other DJ in your area has actively pursued that market. After calling a few schools, you determine that, between the Homecoming dance and Senior Prom, there are plenty of other events to keep you busy. After talking to a few of the advisors who book DJs for the institutions, you set a reasonable price and design a package that they should find attractive. You have now positioned your service for this particular market.

The next step is to create a "positioning statement" that describes what you do that ties you into the potential market. This statement will be used on your business cards, your ads and anything else that you put before the eyes of the public. If you were to specialize in high schools and colleges, along with a huge selection of Top 40, dance and alternative music, you would need a big sound system and a lot of lights because that's what this particular market wants. A simple and possibly effective positioning statement might be "Lots of Lights and as Loud as You Like."

Most Mobile DJs do all types of parties and concentrate on wedding receptions because they're a substantial part of the market. A positioning statement, such as "Fun DJs for Weddings and Other Events," lets potential clients know what you offer in a single line. If your organization offers additional services, such as video recording, your positioning statement could say something like "Walla Walla's Only Full-Service Video and DJ Service."

2 Pricing. *Is your service priced according to your market?*

In the example in the last section, pricing was determined by checking with the people who book DJs for various high schools and colleges in a particular area. If you are more interested in going after the lucrative wedding reception market, begin by calling (or having a friend call) other DJs in your area. Play the part of a bride or groom and request information for an upcoming wedding reception. Ask such questions as:

- What's the minimum number of hours they will play?
- What's the standard rate for four or five hours?
- How much for overtime?
- Does the price include special lighting?

When checking the prices of other DJs, pick a random upcoming Saturday six to eight months off. Have some particular hours and the name of a legitimate reception hall in mind. Each DJ you call will be asking you some questions and if you don't sound convincing, they may catch on and give you inaccurate information.

After speaking to five or six different DJ services in your area, you will be able to arrive at an average price. Price your service somewhere around that average mark. You can always increase your prices gradually as your calendar fills up. If a special engagement calls for a larger than normal sound and lighting system or demands extra travel time, these should be reflected in the price you quote. Also, don't hesitate to let "supply and demand" affect your prices. It's okay to raise your prices a bit during the peak season, then drop them when things start to back off. If a client calls five DJs and is torn between three of them, price will usually be the determining factor.

3 Promotion. *How well do you promote and advertise your service?*

The best and least expensive way to promote your service is by demonstrating what you do. While you are waiting for the paying gigs to start coming your way, make yourself available to play at fundraisers, fairs, store openings, chicken barbecues and any other gathering. It doesn't have to be a dance, just a place where you can expose your service to potential clients. To get the most mileage out of these appearances, display a professional-looking sign or table banner that has your name and phone number on it. Do a good job and some of the people will recommend you. If you enjoy being a mobile entertainer and it doesn't conflict with your paying job, get out and play whenever you can just for the fun, experience and exposure.

As for paid advertising, new options and opportunities appear almost daily. In order to keep pace, businesses have adopted advertising strategies that are much more focused. Considering the options and costs involved, it is imperative that you know what resources are available and how to use them in creating an effective and comprehensive advertising program.

4 *Packaging. Does your service appear professional and reliable?*

Remember the apples? Let's assume two different farmers produce apples that are identical in variety, size, taste, color and price. Farmer Fribus picks his apples and sells them in plain brown "grocery bags." Farmer Framus packs his apples in attractive boxes that say "Fresh from Farmer Framus'" on the side. In almost every instance, the consumer will buy a Farmer Framus apple over one sold by Farmer Fribus. Why? Because people do judge a product by the way it's packaged. It's not enough to be able to offer people good service—you have to sell them on it first. To create an attractive package for your DJ service, offer your potential customer little extras like:

1. A complete and professional presentation sheet or brochure that describes your service in detail.
2. A high-quality color picture taken at one of your performances or at a photographer's studio.
3. A videotape of your DJ service in action.
4. A list of satisfied customers and their comments.
5. A list of party houses where you've performed.

You only get one chance to make a first impression. Package your service properly and your prospects may not even bother to call the others.

5 *Performance. Does your product live up to its claims?*

The final P in marketing a DJ service is the end product: your Performance. A good DJ will invest time preparing for each gig, checking equipment, making sure of the pronunciation of the names he or she will be introducing and checking that the right music is packed and ready to go. One of the best and least expensive ways to intensify your marketing efforts at your performances is by using a colorful table drape or banner. There are two reasons why this is important. People tend to remember what they see more than what they hear. A tastefully designed table drape visually reinforces the name of your service in their minds.

The second reason for the banner is to hide all your equipment boxes, amplifier and other accessories. People do judge a DJ by the kind of job he does and how professionally he went about doing it. Nothing makes a DJ look more unprofessional than disorganization. The best way to make a setup look clean and professional is to hide all your wires, cases and boxes behind a banner. Until you get a banner, a bright, solid-colored tablecloth will work fine.

Practice and preparation are paramount to a good performance. Do a good job from the start and you'll come away from your very first gig with two or more referrals. This will start a cycle which will continually bring more new bookings via "word-of-mouth" advertising—and that's the best promotion there is. •

Spinnin' 2000 by Robert A. Lindquist and Dennis E. Hampson is published by ProDJ Publishing. It is one of nearly a dozen books specifically for the DJ industry available at many disc jockey stores and online DJ stores nationwide. Please check out www.prodjpublishing.com for dealers in your area or ask your favorite DJ store to contact ProDJ Publishing at 800-257-7635.

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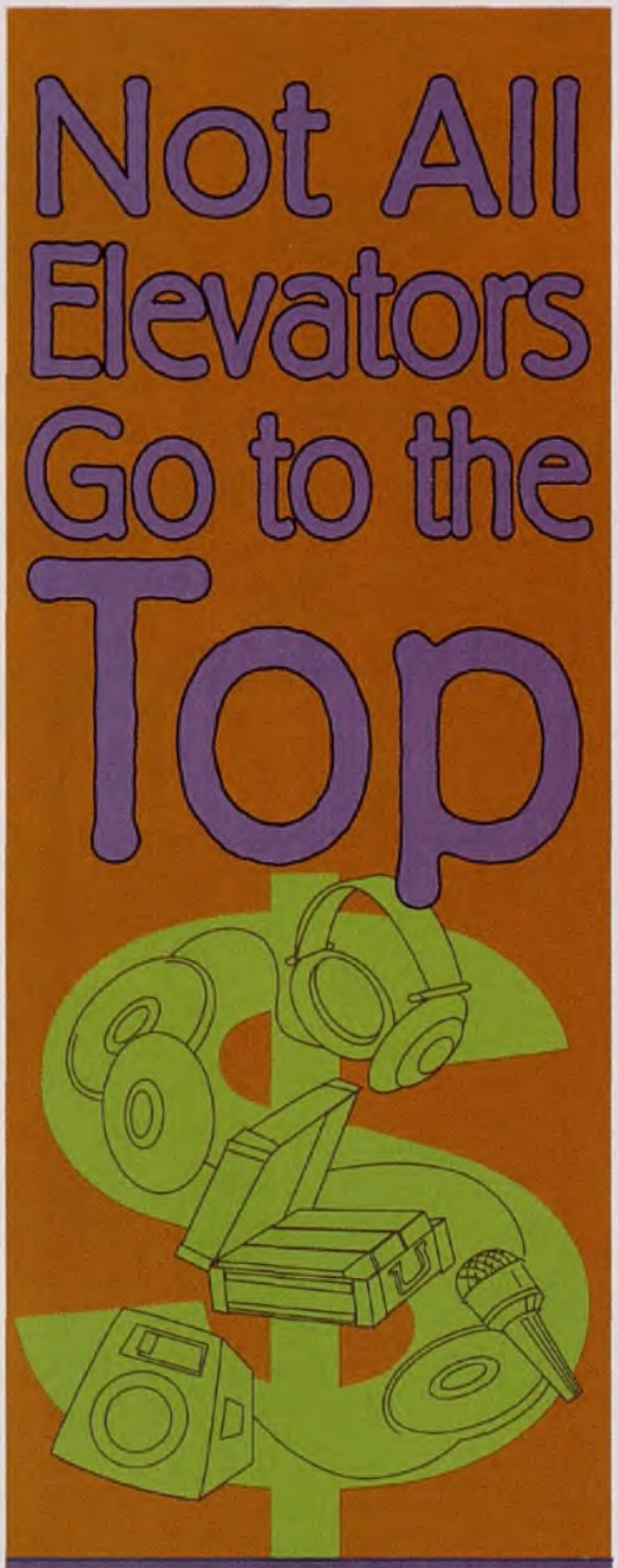
By Mark Johnson

Not All Elevators Go to the Top



Alternative views of the DJ pricing debate – the first in a series

I can't think of a more sensitive topic for DJs than pricing. While an obvious intention would be to optimize the value of your DJ performance to increase your income, I believe that many DJs find this easier said than done. There are debates between different concepts of professionalism as if it's 100% directly related to the price. Is a $300 DJ less professional than a $1,200 one? I would applaud a DJ's sales skills for getting $1,200 for the same $300 gig, based on the same services. Do we lower-priced DJs need to beef up our services (if possible) by adding a second MC, some dancers, some props or giveaways, lots of lighting or other add-ons? Or is it something intangible that brings the big bucks.

There are other debates regarding which events you should take. I don't think a brand new DJ could immediately open his doors and have his first event be a $1,200 wedding. I believe that all of these debates regarding price tend to be focused on the career of a DJ and the momentum he can build. If you get pretty busy, you can become selective with the events you take and lean towards the more lucrative ones. If you aren't tremendously busy, then you may tend to accept the first event for any particular date. Not that you would give your services away, but you will be subconsciously influenced by making something versus making nothing.

Staking Out the Middle Ground

I won't launch into a dissertation establishing that DJs are the absolute center of any party and they should be paid the lion's share of the entire party budget. That topic is oft repeated and I really can't write from that perspective. Nor will I elaborate on the lowest type of DJ, one who has scratchy records, inferior equipment, and poor presentation and basically doesn't help advance the Mobile DJ profession as a serious entity.

I will address the "middle DJs," those who may have a full-time job and perform on the weekends for fun and profit. This probably excludes the multi-unit companies or high-end single DJ companies that are already successful and may have already met the challenges of maintaining a high price and being selective about their events.

These middle DJs strive for the highest degree of professionalism but may fall short of the big bucks when competing with the "big guys" who have office space, lots of advertising, bridal show presence and an overall "corporate" image. We may imagine one day having a staff of DJs, but for now we're pretty content being a one-person show.

We can rationalize our lower prices as we certainly have fewer expenses. Many of us work out of home-based offices and can meet with potential clients in the evening or on the weekends. A lot of our clients aren't available for afternoon meetings in our DJ demo rooms.

We may feel comfortable with our prices, somehow knowing that we're doing right by the customer by providing a first class product without risking a perception of over-pricing. Also, having a full time job allows us to make our majority of income during the week and keeps the DJ business fun instead of obligatory.

We don't have to grab each and every event that comes to us. I, for one, do not do New Year's Eve parties anymore. I got burned out dealing with the drunk guests, long hours, police roadblocks, and late drives home with other dangerous drivers, not to mention missing the time socializing with my friends and family on that night.

Identifying relative prices in your area is another challenge. When I'm in a multiple-event banquet center, I wander over to the other DJs and somehow usually manage to discover their prices for that event. Most often, they are quite higher than my regular price. I take an overall look at their systems, music collections, and lighting setups, and also watch some of their performances to see where I stand. Often, I come away with the feeling that I am leaving money on the table because they aren't really doing anything bigger (or better) than what I am capable of.

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So I say to myself, how can I increase my own income? Do I start with a high price and spend time defending it with my usual type of clients? Do I have the right type of clients that may not be that price sensitive? Do I portray the kind of image that warrants a much higher price? Do I need to add on all the extras that may net me just a few more dollars and may not be worth the bother? What could be the magic item that might help me earn more?

Perhaps I could aggressively increase my price as time goes on, testing to see the reactions of the clients. That opens up a whole new can of worms, as each new customer would only hear my "current" price. Maybe there is a plateau of pricing that I'm comfortable with charging. Quite honestly, I cannot see myself charging $800 for a four-hour event. Something rubs me the wrong way about it. Maybe that's just my own problem.

Playing with Different Numbers

I know that I'm not the biggest or best Mobile DJ in my geographical area. But I'm certainly not the smallest or worst either. I'm quite content with my position in the overall scheme of things.

In fact, I believe I serve a purpose. Many times the customers call me and are happy with my prices, as they can't understand why a DJ for a 30-guest christening party should cost $800. Perhaps the larger DJs can always fill their slots at the higher prices and don't need to budge, even for a much smaller event. I believe that there's a wonderful opportunity to make money on the events that aren't the blank-check kind of events like weddings and bar mitzvahs.

The Yellow Pages are filled with many DJs, ranging from the 15-100 unit companies to very established single-system DJs. There is and always will be plenty of competition for the client's business. I also believe that there is a lot of business to go around and not every event is a $20,000 wedding.

I've booked many events when the clients don't feel that the price is right for the event they are planning. I come across as a hero during the conversation when the bride spills the beans by telling me how much another DJ wants to charge. Having that amount as a ceiling from which to work, I find that there's usually a pretty good gap between my regular price and that price. If I cut the difference in half, I win and she wins.

Of course, not every customer will tell you about the other DJs' prices before getting yours. Often, they will either like your price or inform you that another DJ can do it for less. At this point you're venturing into a commodity auction and you have to be careful not to let things spiral downward too far.

I didn't want to use actual numbers, but I feel I must now, to make my point clear. If your regular price is $350 and she (the bride) has a price of $200 in mind, then clearly there has to be a performance difference that you would have to overcome to get your $350. If she downplays the event, focusing only on price, then the $200 is probably all she will spend regardless of your greatness. You should probably pass on this one.

If your regular price is $600 and the other DJ is $450, then there could be some room for negotiation. Surely, given the service nature of our business, you could split the difference and offer $525 if you detect that she really would prefer to have you. Maybe you could even go for $450 if the circumstances warrant (slow date, convenience, exposure, etc.).

In conclusion, the overall intent to increase our prices is only natural. However, I feel that there are many DJs who are quite comfortable with their prices, even though they aren't the highest in their area. Just like there are many different kinds of events DJs play for, there are different kinds of prices that these DJs can charge for them. •

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A question of Value

What's the price of a good reputation—for individual DJs and the DJ profession?

By Mike Ficher

Tossed somewhere in the muddled expanse between handyman and journeyman, a mobile disc jockey is too often perceived as an interchangeable commodity rather than a skilled professional. The downside of the commodity label is that *price*—rather than *value*—frequently becomes a primary consideration for commerce.

To consumers, skilled professionals are generally viewed as unique and distinctive, offering specialized services or products. Quality and value are more critical factors in their decision-making process than cost, when it comes to choosing a professional service-provider. The difference is significant, and fuels how our clients, the general public and members of our profession visualize the value equation.

ECONOMICS 101

A fundamental, generally accepted concept of free market economics is that price is set by what the market will bear. It's important to realize that we have the ability, as a profession, to shape the public perception of that market—and, in turn, the perceived value of our services.

If we conduct ourselves with unwavering ethics, high standards and incomparable behavior, and if we provide a value that is consistent with or, better yet, exceeds the expectations of our clients, we increase the opportunities to secure reasonable compensation for our services.

Frankly, if we constantly deliver excellence, the money—and the respect—will be there.

THE $1,200 QUESTION

For years, the DJ community has heard the message from Mark Ferrell and fellow torchbearers about raising prices—the rallying cry of "$1,200!" and unfavorable comparisons to the cost of the veggie platter provide catchphrases for the campaign. Perhaps no other development in the past ten years has ignited such a firestorm of controversy within the DJ community as this issue.

Many cling to outdated notions of our value—some out of fear; some because of indifference of the market to the value of an entertainer ("It's just the DJ!"); some because of intense competition; some because they need to work and to put food on the table; and, some because, frankly, they don't feel they are worth it.

Wherever you sit, stand or kneel on this issue, we need to shift the focus of the discussion from the $1,200 figure to the zealous perfection of the quality, ethics, standards and redefinition of the mission of our profession (which are, by the way, critical but *frequently overlooked* aspects of Mark's message). Only when we can demonstrate those attributes in an effective, non-combative, unfailing manner will we reap the esteem—and rewards—of the general public and our clients.

THROUGH THE LENS

Each guest, family member, bridal party attendant and the bride and groom cherish a unique set of memories from the wedding day. To say the disc jockey drives the whole event is awfully pretentious. Yes, we do provide a very critical part—perhaps more than most vendors—of the success of the event. But the DJ is one of several integral members of a cohesive team of service providers (ideally speaking) dedicated to creating a seamless, fulfilling and unique experience for the client. That observation, though, certainly does not diminish our value or warrant the acceptance of a poor perception of our services. On the contrary, we need to establish a realistic perception of our role, one aimed at integrating effortlessly with all the vendors contributing to the event. Remember, each guest and participant takes away a distinct impression of the day—and our part in creating that impression, while not always at the top of each guest's list of memories, is frequently vulnerable to disparagement.

THE RULES OF THE FLOOR

As a profession, we need to conduct our business with the highest ethical standards, pilot ourselves with behavior and morals beyond reproach and construct an atmo-

If we constantly deliver excellence, the money—and the respect—will be there.

sphere of continual professional development.

We need to place our clients at the center of our universe. The business is not about us—the business is about our clients. We would not exist without them.

For the general public, we need to coordinate a non-egotistical public relations campaign to clearly define what the modern DJ entertainer does, how our enhanced skills benefit clients and energize their events, and what they can expect from the profession. The best positive PR is earned by positive actions: every day, at each gig, with each contact, with each presentation, and not with self-serving hype and brazen chest pounding.

We need to deliver.

WHO ARE YOU?

Many professions can weed out unskilled practitioners through certification or the reporting of incompetence. Lawyers must pass a bar exam to practice; accountants now can earn accreditation not only as CPAs, but for other disciplines including ABV, CITP, and PFS; doctors must pass a state medical exam and the public can inform the board of unscrupulous practices and ineffectual practitioners; apprentices in many trades must display appropriate expertise before earning status as craftsmen. No such standards or mechanisms exist in the mobile entertainment profession to give the public confidence that a certain level of competence and professionalism exists across the board.

A sound system, transportation, and some music—bingo, you're in business. No board certification, state exam, or degree achievement necessary. Many don't even see the need for a business license.

YOU ARE THE SOLUTION

In lieu of these safeguards, each individual in the business must accept responsibility to actualize the ideals noted earlier, if we are to realize our potential as a profession and earn the respect, confidence, support, and compensation so richly desired. "Every man owes part of his time and money to the business or industry in which he is engaged," offered Theodore Roosevelt. "No man has the moral right to withhold his support from an organization that is striving to improve conditions within his sphere."

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Making the CONNECTION

By Todd Mitchem

Insight into the mysteries of audience inspiration

Have you ever felt like the audience just gets lost during your event? Have you ever uttered the words, "Wow! This is a tough group!" How many times have you attempted to interact with the audience only to have your icebreaker, contest, song choice or interactive musical routine fail miserably? You are not alone—but you do not need to experience this ever again!

Before we get into the five secrets, let me point out that audiences are essentially all the same. They are all made up of people, some responsive, some not. In every crowd there is a loud person, a fun individual, and a quiet type. I have performed all over the world and one thing is consistent: every audience is essentially made up of the same types of people.

When you understand this group dynamic, it is easy to break apart interaction to get to the core of what works and what doesn't. In order for you to apply the following five secrets you must first open your mind to the possibility that, all along, it has not been the particular audience that was the problem but what you were doing. It's time to fix it!

In my many workshops and seminars I began to notice five common items that most performers were missing. Some would have one or two skills down but would miss the rest. Over the years, I defined these elements so I could teach them. So here they are...five interactive secrets and what they mean to your performance:

1 - Find the Focal Point and Always Use It

The focal point in the room can be simply defined as the place most of the group will focus on when you or anyone else speaks on the microphone. It is simple to locate, but more difficult to utilize to the best of your ability. It almost never changes, unless you start from that point and change it yourself. It is obvious, but most often overlooked.

For example, at a wedding reception, the focal point will most likely be the head table or sweetheart table. However, if the table is off to the side or mixed into the audience it gets lost and the focal point changes.

Once you have defined where the focal point is, you can begin to make it work for you and, more importantly, you can begin to stop fighting its power. Here is a simple tip about the focal point: ALWAYS START FROM IT! When you really want the audience's full attention, you must speak from the focal point. Anywhere else and you will spend a great deal of time

trying to "convince" the crowd of your importance. Conversely, when you begin from the focal point you immediately begin the process of commanding complete attention.

What if you are alone and need to play music, MC, coordinate everything and still keep it together? No problem, just begin to change your patterns and break out of the unconstructive "that's the way I've always done it" mentality.

Here's how to begin without becoming overwhelmed: Practice starting every conversation with the audience from the focal point. Start small. Make simple opening announcements from that crucial point and work your way up to always beginning from there. The main thing is to stop hiding behind your gear, and start getting involved! Use the focal point—even set up in it if you can.

2 - Stop Using Unresponsive Comments (Traps)

This is a huge point. You are most likely using these at every event. Your trouble with "unresponsive" audiences begins right at the first unresponsive comment you may be uttering event after event. "How is everybody feeling tonight?" When you say this to a group, you are immediately creating a problem and you are allowing them to move away instead of moving closer to you.

Let's say for the sake of argument that several people at your next event have had a bad day, week, month, year, or life. Your comment just reminded every person who is unhappy about all of the reasons they are unhappy. The uncertainty in your comment has created an unresponsive segment of your group.

So what are you really trying to achieve by saying things like, "How are you feeling?" "Who is ready to party?" and other equally subjective comments? You are attempting, in the only way you have learned, to elicit a positive response from the audience—most likely, a response of noise. But I can tell you this: you'll achieve a very specific and 100% more powerful response by simply telling the audience what they are going to do and how they are going to feel!

The next time you speak to an audience instead of asking, "How is everybody feeling tonight?" start out with, "Tonight you are all going to experience an amazing event! So before we continue, everyone make as much noise as you can on the count of three…one…two…three." I can guarantee with absolute certainty that this approach will command an amazing response. I have seen this direct approach conquer innumerable audiences.

This is a crucial step to commanding complete control over your groups. Every time you catch yourself saying something unresponsive, immediately yell out in your mind, "TRAP!" It will change your performance forever!

Stop asking permission from the crowd by saying, "Can I please have your attention?" When you say please to people you think you are being polite, when what you are actually doing is asking permission to continue. This takes control away from you and gives it to the audience. STOP THE TRAPS!

3 - Always Live In the Moment

When I was studying acting in Chicago, my coach pressed us all to live in the moment within the scene. As I began to develop my skills as a live performer I started to apply this simple concept and the results were amazing!

To live in the moment with the event or client, you must clear your head of all outer influences and focus completely on what is happening at the event.

The best way I can illustrate this is with a specific example. As the Entertainment Director at J&M Entertainment in California, one of my tasks was to train the talent on a weekly basis. After a very busy weekend, one of my lead performers shared a story about how living in the moment had paid off for him. At the wedding reception that he hosted, he put himself in the moment of the father of the bride just before the Father-Daughter dance. As he was walking with the father toward the bride, he spoke these words on the microphone, directly to him: "As you walk closer to your daughter, imagine the day she was born...now imagine the first time she walked...picture her as a teenager...and then the day she told you she was to be married. She will always be your little girl." Needless to say we all had chills as we listened to his story, and at the event, our MC said he was nearly in tears.

In order for you to completely satisfy and understand your client, you must live in their moment. Doing this is not so difficult, but it does take discipline. When you're at the event, remember that you are just a person like everyone else. Project this realism to the audience. I see many of the performers I train talking above the audience in a gameshow-esque style of speaking. Put your personal feelings and attitude away and begin to focus on each moment.

Does your client need wine and you notice it? Go and get the wine. Does your client need to change the itinerary at the last minute? Well then change the itinerary. Your personal feelings are irrelevant when it comes to the overall success of the event. If you want to control the audience, you'd better begin to live in the event side by side with them!

4 - Practice First!

When creating or trying out a new interactive icebreaker, contest or interactive musical routine, you MUST rehearse it first. I can not stress enough how much of the ineffective material can be weeded out if you simply run the element before you get it in front of an audience. When you don't practice, you subject your audiences to a pathetic version of the activity, since it usually takes a few performances to finally work out the defects.

During my workshops the participants experience this firsthand. I always have them create and rehearse their own interactive elements—first as the host, then as a participant. You can do this at home or in the office. Try out your games and routines out with your children, your significant other or

your friends. Follow up by asking for honest feedback, and then adjust the element to make it more specific. It works!

How long should you spend in rehearsal? If you can conduct the activity without missing a line, rule, or step, you are ready to perform it. If you at any point feel that a part of it is uncertain, you need more time before introducing the new activity.

The rehearsal step is a crucial one, but the lazy performer skips it every time. Practicing gives you, the hard working professional, an edge. As you grow your skills, as well as your process, you will begin to conquer the competition.

5 - Be Creative Instead of Reactive

When a problem or challenge steps in your path what do you do? Do you react habitually based on years of misguided teaching or do you immediately find a creative way to make the challenge work for you?

In your events you will certainly be faced with many challenges. The microphones will inadvertently stop working. The schedule will change. And yes, you will face the dreaded intoxicated guest. The method you use to handle these situations will either add to your level of audience control or subtract from it. The power lies solely in you.

To better understand the psychology of this concept, let's first take the ego out of the challenge and realize that it is not happening TO you. You are not a victim. The problem is neither good nor bad—it just IS. Your perception of it makes it good or bad. Armed with this realization, you can deal with any issue.

Problems, or as I call them, "Tools," are powerful moments that, when properly embraced, can yield a powerful and positive result. For example, the next time you are working at an event and a CD skips, immediately stop the song,

look at the audience and say, "Ladies and gentlemen, we have stopped the music for a reason. You are all looking wonderful, but we need to make sure everyone is together as one group before we can move on. Everyone, as loud as you can, make noise now!" Now, we are not addressing or making fun of the moment, instead we are using the moment to create a bigger, more effective situation.

The trick to becoming more creative is through an exercise I simply call, "The 10." Do this now. Get a blank piece of paper and write three of the top problems or situations that create a challenge for you on a regular basis. Now under each one of these, list ten methods for creating a better moment from the potentially negative one. This exercise will yield immediate positive results. As one of my past trainees put it, "I am getting so good at this that I now look for these Tools just so I create something even more special than the competition!" Now that is creative living.

The Secrets of Your Success

From years of experience and hundreds of workshops I can tell you with complete certainty that these five secrets will change you for the better. If you apply them with an open mind and really work at them you will become a better performer. You will begin to see immediate results with your events. Tear out the cheat sheet that accompanies this article and keep it with you to remember these secrets. I promise you that you are on the way to mastering audience control!•

To contact Todd, order his new DVDs, or sign up for his seminars, visit www.mitcheminteractive.com. Todd's next workshop is scheduled for Monday, February 16, 2004 at the Tropicana Hotel in Las Vegas, just prior to Mobile Beat's *Winter DJ Show & Conference.*

TODD MITCHEM'S 5 INTERACTIVE SECRETS

FIND THE FOCAL POINT AND ALWAYS USE IT

- Where will people look first when I speak on the microphone?
- How can I begin in the focal point and then move to another location creatively?

STOP USING UNRESPONSIVE COMMENTS (TRAPS)

- On the count of 3, make some noise!
- Tonight will be a great night.
- You all look energized and in the mood for fun!

DO NOT USE THE WORD "PLEASE"!

ALWAYS LIVE IN THE MOMENT

- What is the client or the audience feeling right now and how can I enhance that feeling?

PRACTICE FIRST!

- Do I have the interactive element perfected or do I continue to get lost?
- Should I really try this now or can it be worked on and improved first?

BE CREATIVE INSTEAD OF REACTIVE

- How can I use this "TOOL" to make the event better?
- This is not happening to me. I am not a victim and it is not personal.
- I will keep my ego in check at all times!

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SPECIAL REPORT: DJ TV

Providing a Slice of Reality TV's Reality

By Tony Barthel

Our own editor-at-large gets a taste of fame in service of the story

My friend Tom in Cleveland says that everyone in California has visions of being on television. I've always told him he's nuts but recently when Holly LeFevre, the co-president of the Los Angeles Chapter of the Association of Bridal Consultants, called me and asked if I wanted to be part of a TV show about weddings, well, I proved Tom right.

Today, there is no shortage of television programs about weddings. Several cable channels have seized the opportunity to focus on such an emotional day, using different tactics to make their shows unique.

Dear Diary

I got involved with Lifetime Network's *My Best Friend's Wedding—The I Do Diaries.*

The premise of the hour-long show is that two friends plan each other's weddings without any input from their friend. They do get the help of a professional wedding coordinator, which is how Holly LeFevre got into the picture. On the big day everything is a surprise for the bride and groom from the dress to the location. Each episode contains a complete pair of weddings.

So far, it seems that the series has taken the high road in terms of the surprises—all aspects of the programs that I've seen have been focused on giving the bride a great day, rather than a Jerry Springer-type experience.

As of the writing of this article, I've been involved in the taping of three segments of the program, two of which have already aired. (The first episode that I was involved with aired on Monday, November 24, 2003)

TV Reality: Going with the Flow

The actual taping of the programs produced some interesting experiences. While the wedding coordinator has input into the planning, once the cameras started rolling, the producers had a lot more input and control.

The weddings were live, actual events with real guests and all the trappings of a typical nuptial—but there were still a few "television moments" where everything had to be re-shot. During the taping, people of all sorts had opinions on how things should go. And they all had walkie-talkies.

My instructions included toning down my generally upbeat way of making announcements because it wasn't "elegant enough." There were also a lot of production issues to be dealt with. An example of this involved the music, which all had to be royalty-free during any portion of the program where the cameras were likely to capture conversation. Fortunately my computerized music system allowed me to print up lists of the songs I played, which I gave to the production company—a huge help.

The cameras were definitely noticeable but weren't completely in the way. Since the programs are not scripted at all, there were really no re-takes for questionable words used in toasts or the like. However, a few times things were re-shot to take advantage of better camera angles, etc. This was particularly true of the ceremonies.

The Rest of the Story

Most television programs tend to focus on the planning

and then the ceremony, while the reception—where DJs have the biggest role—is just a tertiary part of the whole experience. The program's focus is on the emotional process of getting ready for the big moment, leaving very little air time for the reception. This, of course, conflicts with a DJ's perspective on the importance of the reception to the whole day. However, if the program showed much more of the reception, there would be a lot of viewers switching away because they would simply be bored. Conflict or the potential for conflict is what makes for a good story—and what makes people tune in, plain and simple.

I was disappointed that the charger plates—those metallic plates that go under the china plates that you eat from—actually got incrementally more air time than I did. We all know the tremendous importance charger plates have on a reception, right?

Overall it was an interesting and eye-opening experience. I've learned that, as a group of professionals, DJs still have to convince the general public just what an impact our services have on a wedding reception. In this particular case I had no input on the planning of the wedding. I got the feeling that the production company believes wedding planners are the only ones who take an advance interest in the process. They seemed to follow the common belief that a DJ just shows up at a reception and makes the magic happen.

Now, if I could only incorporate charger plates into my act, I'd get more air time. Maybe if I could get them to spin on poles...•

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Summer Goes On, Beyond the Last Dance

Donna Summer's music keeps helping people dance and forget their troubles

By Dan Walsh

Whatever their personal opinions may be of the disco era, most Mobile DJs who are old enough to remember will admit that the profession was propelled forward in a big way by the whole disco craze, as it expanded from the clubs of New York City to dance floors everywhere. And the voice heard most often, floating over the pounding beats in posh party spots, as well as in VFW halls, was that of the ultimate disco diva, Donna Summer.

During the big party that was the late seventies, she was dubbed the "Queen of Disco" and a "sex goddess." Later on, after a string of hits and Grammy honors, she was acknowledged as a legendary singer, as well as an inspiration and an influence on those who followed. Although the style that catapulted her to fame went the way of every musical fashion, Summer has proven her own staying power.

Last Dance Lasts

For DJs and fans, this story is about more than just one song. Starting in 1975 with "Love to Love You Baby" and including hits like "Hot Stuff," "On the Radio," "She Works Hard for the Money," "Bad Girls," "Try Me, I Know We Can Make It," "I Feel Love," and more, her songs have been bringing people out on the dance floor and keeping them there while they sing along for more than a quarter-century.

Her success owed a lot to timing. Her flair for Broadway-style drama (which some labeled "kitschy") and the slick production techniques of Giorgio Moroder, who layered gobs of newly accessible electronic synthesizer sounds with bombastic string arrangements, were just the thing for the self-indulgent disco era. But the big music and the big beat would have only been background music without Summer's powerful, soulful voice.

There is one song, however, that stands out for its staying power as a party staple. Although they've heard it a million times or more, the one song that Mobile DJs are most fond of, not necessarily because of the music itself, but because it usually signals the end of another long gig, is "Last Dance." It's a song that seems to perfectly capture that final moment, when the celebration finally has to end and become another nostalgic memory. This track was a jewel in the Disco Queen's crown, having won her an Oscar for its part in the film, *Thank God It's Friday*.

"Of all the songs from those days, I probably still feel most connected to 'Last Dance,'" says the singer. "[I] Sing it and it brings tears to my eyes. For me, it's become a poignant song. There were a lot of people in my life who are not with us anymore. It's like I'm singing to the memory of people who are special to me."[1]

Hot Stuff
For more on Donna Summer's life and career, check out her recently released biography, Ordinary Girl: The Journey (Villard Books, a division of Random House, 2003)

Try Me

Summer has certainly weathered some storms throughout her career. She survived a severe heart condition and depression that triggered a suicide attempt, as well as the "death of disco." Another mega-hit, "She Works Hard for the Money," showed that she would not go down with the disco ship, but could, instead, reinvent herself as a different kind of dance-pop star in 1983. She had never felt comfortable with the dance diva/sex goddess thing anyway. Her church upbringing and the early influence of gospel great Mahalia Jackson would prove to have a deeper impact on her entire career than the fleeting excesses of half a decade. Although without the high profile she enjoyed during the disco era, she continued recording and collaborating with a variety of music luminaries throughout the eighties and into the nineties. In 1997, her song, "Carry On," won top honors at the Grammies, in that year's newly created Best Dance Recording category.

While "Last Dance" may capture that bittersweet end-of-the-party vibe, the lyrics of "Carry On" say more about what seems to drive this artist forward:

Carry on
Carry on my love
Just don't look back again
Follow the dream that's in you.

1) Quoted at http://www.epiccenter.com/EpicCenter/custom/1111/, June, 1999

The big music and the big beat would have only been background music without Summer's powerful, soulful voice.

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South Asian Groove Invasion

By Andy Schmitz

Panjabi MC cooks up a spicy new dance floor recipe by combining ancient and cutting-edge rhythms

Panjabi MC

Panjabi MC is the hottest thing from the United Kingdom since the Beatles, burning up dance floors as well as the charts with his catchy and unique "Desi" sound. This music is a mixture of traditional Hindu music, or "Bhangra," and modern music like hip-hop and R&B.

His huge crossover hit "Mundian to Bach Ke" samples the extremely catchy bass line from the theme of the '80s television show *Knight Rider*, and combines it with traditional Indian percussion and instrumentation. Labh Janjua's vocal delivery of lyrics in Hindi gives a nod to traditional Hindi music, and adds a heavy dose of 21st-century world music hipness, while the *Knight Rider* reference provides a definite kitsch element. The single was a huge club hit before radio took notice. "Mundian to Bach Ke" landed in the UK charts at number 8 in January 2003.

Having successfully brought his music all over the world, Panjabi MC readies himself for international stardom with "Mundian to Bach Ke" being virtually everywhere on TV, in movies, on radio and in the clubs. The great thing about this song and about Desi music in general, is its wide appeal. With infectious grooves and exotic overtones, eclectic sampling and club ready beats, it seems to herald yet another wave of dance music, this time with a decidedly eastern emphasis that puts western dance music in an exciting new context.

Each of the components of this style of music could stand on its own as "danceable," and yet when you combine the ingredients the groove becomes inescapable. There is no choice—you must dance! Hip-hop, Bhangra, chanting, rap, synthesizers, tablas (distinctive-sounding Indian instruments), and thundering bass lines all combine for a brand new sound, yet each is responsible for helping dance music along throughout history. Boosting his "street cred" to a higher level, Panjabi experienced the good fortune of having rap artist Jay-Z lend his talents to "Mundian to Bach Ke," as well.

Although different artists in the past have referenced eastern and Asian music and crossed it with modern timings and styles, none has had the crossover appeal Panjabi is receiving. Already awarded MTV Europe's highest accolade of Best New Dance Act, and selling millions of CDs, Panjabi is poised for Desi-world takeover.

Some of you may be wondering, as we did, what "Mundian to Bach Ke" means. Translated, the title is "Beware of the Boys," and the song is actually a warning to an attractive young woman to keep her face hidden from the evil desires of men. The record which featured the hit song is actually Panjabi's third full-length and is titled Beware—with due cause. Whether the dance music community knows it or not, the South Asian groove invasion is already well under way. ●

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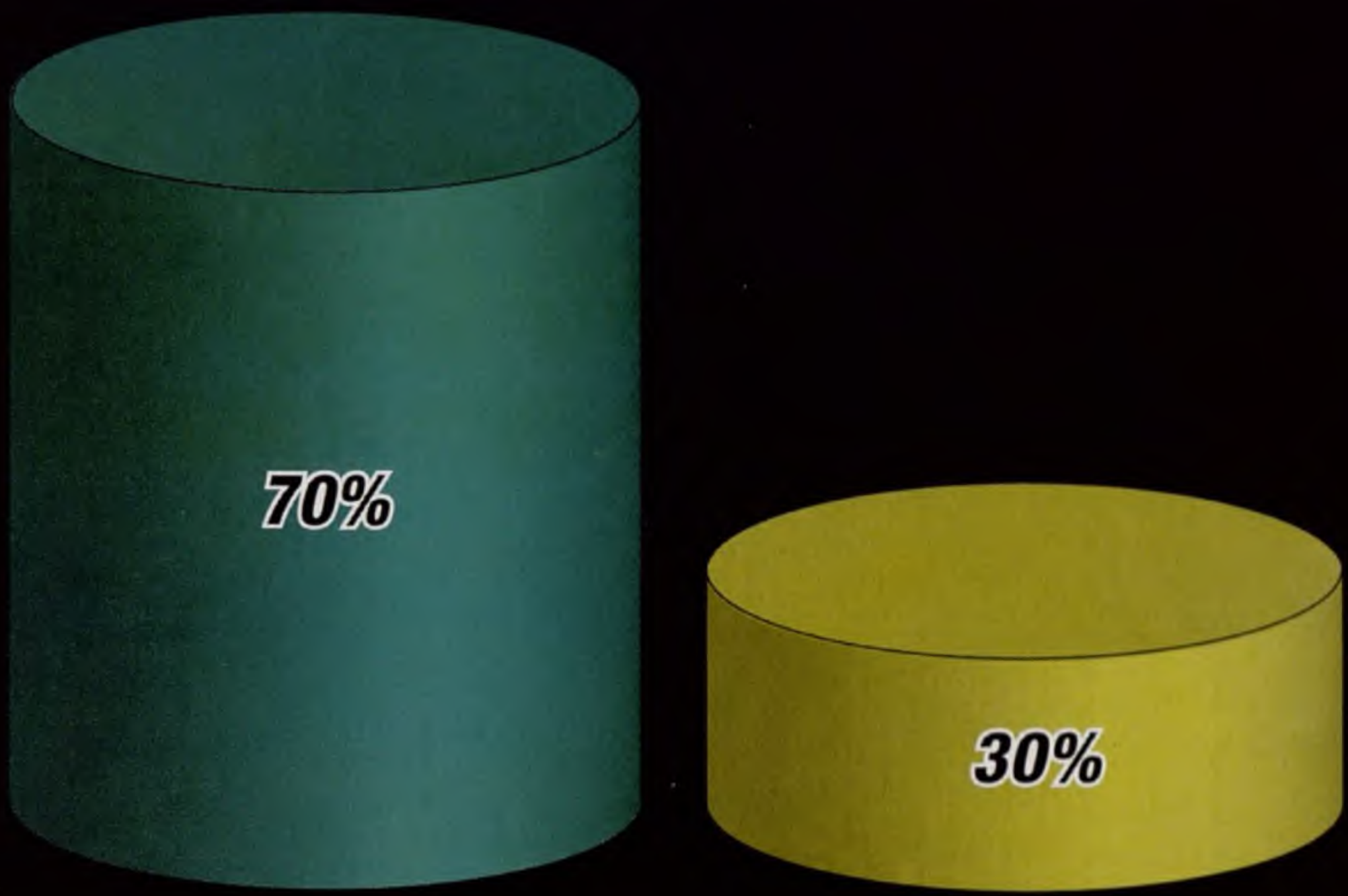

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Update

By Dave Kreiner

Need a little help shaking off the winter blues? Well, here comes a whole load of kick-butt remixes to get the pre-spring break party atmosphere going.

REMIX REPORT

First up is ***ULTIMIX 102***. Getting things started is "I Begin To Wonder" (Parts 1 and 2) from Kylie's sister Dannii Minogue, at 125 and 129 BPM respectively. Part 1 is a mid-tempo, very sexy, pop houser with a slick retro synth bass line and strong 4x4 beats. Part 2 is a little faster and has elements of the classic "You Spin Me Round (Like a Record)" by Dead or Alive, but totally different vocals. As on other remix issues, this is not a re-make of "You Spin..." but a total reworking of the club hit. Next comes a sped-up (136 BPM) version of "Trouble" by Pink. This remix has more of a pop dance feel than her past rock-styled efforts, but there is still plenty of crunchy rock guitar in the mix. My favorite R&B artist, Beyonce, follows with the huge radio joint, "Baby Boy" (featuring Sean Paul), at a very housed-up 132 BPM. This fast dance tempo really works on this song. A big bass line and super clean remix make this a must have late night version. The old Alicia Bridges disco classic "I Love The Nightlife" (the XXX version—with explicit lyrics) gets a euro-house make over by Capretta (130 BPM). This is a real smoker and will have your crowd steaming.

Another huge radio hit is "Milkshake" from Kelis at a zesty 129 BPM. This remix is totally happening and will get tons of respect from your dance floor. With an almost freestyle feel, this mix is the best on the set. TV and movie pop queen Hilary Duff gets a 132-BPM dance remix on "So Yesterday" (Ultimix Edit). With very mature sounding vocals, it has a strong pop house feel that will work in both your early and late programming. The classic club hit "The Power" gets a nice two-part remix from Snap at 109 BPM and 130 BPM. Part 1 has Pan'jabi MC samples and vocals well-placed throughout the mix. This version is closest to the original. Part 2 has a totally different vibe, with a much higher BPM. This mix will work well in late-night sets. With a strong freestyle vibe, next comes "You Mean the World to Me" by Jung (132 BPM). With killer synth bass line and drums, this mostly instrumental song has some nice girly vocals in the mix. Closing out the set is Fountains of Wayne with "Stacy's Mom" at 118 BPM. Rock remixes are always welcome, and this one will work well in early sets.

Next up is the long awaited ***HOT TRACKS 22-4***, the latest in a series that features extended remixes of club and radio hits. Beyonce starts it off with "Crazy In Love" at 125 BPM. This faster beat works really well and will have your dance floor packed. A killer bass line and solid 4x4 kick drum push the mix over the edge. This is the standout remix on the set. Lumidee is next with "Never Leave You (Uh Ooh)" at a peppy 125 BPM. Again, this quicker beat works and is very programmable. The bass line is kickin', with lots of holes to work with. A definite remix to add to your playlist. Cooler Kids get their latest, "Morning Star," pumping with 128 BPM of strong Euro-house energy. It's a super clean mix with clean girly vocals on top. A very mature sounding LeAnn Rimes has a club hit on her hands with "We Can" (128 BPM). The song is another well-remixed Euro-pop houser with very clean vocals. Boomkat's "What U Do 2 Me" (128 BPM) is one of those club songs that grows on you every time you hear it. Their last club hit, "The Wreckoning," was also very strong this summer. This mostly instrumental song is very strong for late night sets and includes smooth female vocals. Thalia gets a major house makeover on the hit, "I Want You" (featuring Fat Joe), at a zippy 129 BPM. The radio version was 90 BPM. The new tempo provides a pop house sound that will work for your late-night sets. Closing out the set is Milky with "Just the Way You Are" at 130 BPM. This very retro-sounding remix gets the filtery treatment with sweet feminine vocals on top.

On the hip-hop and R&B tip is ***STREET TRACKS 72***. Leading off is the latest from Nelly, "Iz U" at 71 BPM. It contains classic Nelly styles and rhymes over a killer drum track—a strong remix. Chingy (featuring Snoop Dogg & Ludacris) follows with "Holidae In" (76 BPM). This huge radio hit gets a nice reworking and a very usable mix. R. Kelly's huge hit "Thoia Thoing" (89 BPM) is the standout remix on the set. The vocals are up high in the mix and the drum track is kickin'. This is a must-have remix of this song. Thalia (featuring Fat Joe) with "I Want You" (92 BPM) stays real close to the original radio version with a pumped-up drum track. This is a great set-starter and will get your dance floor moving right away. Fat Joe and P. Diddy (featuring Dre) get a strong remix with "Girl I'm A Bad Boy" at 95 BPM. It has a nice combination of R&B vocals, hype beats and well-placed raps. Murphy Lee's "Wat Da Hook Gon Be" (95 BPM) is super-strong and will get your crowd screaming for more. This is a much more usable track than the radio version. "Ooh!" by Mary J. Blige (featuring 50 Cent) is a smoothed-out R&B/hip-hopper (93 BPM) with 50's street vibe pushing the remix. MVP Allstars (featuring Stagga Lee) has that dancehall vibe going strong on "Rock Ya Body Mic Check 1, 2" at 103 BPM. Very cool song and very strong remix. Next up is Bad Boy's Da Band with "Bad Boy This Bad Boy That" at 100 BPM, with a ragga vibe and strong raps. Big Tymers' "This Is How We Do" gets a strong, smoothed-out, 101-BPM remix with clean drum beats. Closing out the set is Nodeesha with "Get It While It's Hot" at 106 BPM. Very cool remix and super clean R&B pop vocals wrap up a strong set. There are also three 2-minute bonus loops at the end of the set.

Honorable mention goes out to ***XL/NRG 11*** (see sidebar for track listings). Heads up to all DJs who are looking for remixed club and import music. You will find a treasure trove of killer dance music on this very striking dance set from Hot Tracks, but I am out of space to review this great set.•

David Kreiner is the owner of The Source DJ Music Supply. All CDs reviewed above can be found at www.thesourceformusic.com, where streaming samples are available to preview. Please call 800-775-3472 for a free catalog.

ULTIMIX 102		
I Begin to Wonder, Pt. 1	DANNII MINOGUE	125
I Begin to Wonder, Pt. 2	DANNII MINOGUE	129
Trouble	PINK	136
Baby Boy	BEYONCE feat. SEAN PAUL	132
I Love the Nightlife	CAPRETTA	130
Milkshake	KELIS	129
So Yesterday (Ultimix Edit)	HILARY DUFF	132
The Power, Pt. 1	SNAP	109
The Power, Pt. 2	SNAP	130
You Mean the World to Me	JUNG	132
Stacy's Mom (CD Bonus)	FOUNTAINS OF WAYNE	118
HOT TRACKS 22-4		
Crazy In Love	BEYONCE	125
Never Leave You (Uh Ooh)	LUMIDEE	125
Morning Star	COOLER KIDS	128
We Can	LEANN RIMES	128
What U Do 2 Me	BOOMKAT	128
I Want You	THALIA feat. FAT JOE	129
Just the Way You Are	MILKY	130
STREET TRACKS 72		
Iz U	NELLY	71
Holidae In	CHINGY feat. SNOOP DOGG & LUDACRIS	76.4 / 90
I Want You	THALIA feat. FAT JOE	92
Girl I'm a Bad Boy	FAT JOE & P. DIDDY feat. DRE	95
Wat Da Hook Gon Be	MURPHY LEE	95
Ooh!	MARY J. BLIGE feat. 50 CENT	93
Bad Boy This Bad Boy That	BAD BOY'S DA BAND	100
This Is How We Do	BIG TYMERS	101
Get It While It's Hot	NODEESHA	106
Thoia Thoing (CD bonus)	R. KELLY	89
Rock Ya Body Mic Check 1, 2 (CD bonus)	MVP ALLSTARS feat. STAGGA LEE	103
Bonus Loops:		
Tail Loop		87.7
Bouncy Loop		89.1
Top Billin' Loop		91.4
XL/NRG 11		
So I Begin	GALLEON	124
Real Love	DEBORAH COOPER	131
After All	DELERIUM	135
Falling Over You	GIZELLE	136
All I Want	GARDEWEG	140
Sunlight	DJ SAMMY	140
No, No, No	MANIJAMA	127.1
Secret Love	IAN VAN DAHL	142

A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY

By Jay Maxwell

Don't Fall Apart at the Seams— Learn How to Stitch Together a Diversified Mix

My seven-year-old daughter has a doll, simply named Baby, which she has slept with since her days in the crib.This small doll cost less than $4 but is a priceless companion for her. It goes with her everywhere. Baby is her companion at church, at the store, and eats with her during mealtime at home. Except for school, we know not to leave the house without Baby. As you can imagine, Baby is beginning to show her age after nearly seven years of constant play. Her arms and legs are now quite wobbly and her dress is wearing thin. Like Baby's dress, my nerves have begun to wear thin with my three-year-old son when he teases his sister by pulling the doll by her arms to take her away. I know how special this doll is to her, and I fear that with them pulling on Baby in two different directions, someday she will be pulled apart.

A LITTLE BIT ...

After twenty-two years in the mobile disc jockey profession, I still think of my company as my "baby." I love this job! Each weekend, I still enjoy playing music that will help people have a great time. The clothes I wear have my name and logo. Even my car's license plate is personalized with my phone number: 832-DJDJ. While I may be showing my age after constantly playing week after week, at least my arms and legs haven't yet grown wobbly like my daughter's doll. Her baby and I do have one major thing in common though—being pulled in two opposite directions at the same time. Whether you are a newcomer to the business or a seasoned veteran, one thing we can all agree on is that the diversity of music is what keeps this job from becoming boring. Too often, however, guests at an event want very different genres of music played...and they want their song played next. It's the old "play something we can dance to—NOW!" routine. What if one person wants country music and another wants hip-hop? You feel exactly like a doll being pulled in different directions. The dilemma is how to keep the party going, pleasing all the guests, and staying in one piece. The solution lies in finding common ground while still fulfilling the spirit of everyone's requests.

SEGUE TO A SOLUTION

It has been almost 30 years since *The Donny and Marie Show* debuted on television. It was just one of the many variety shows that were popular at the time. Perhaps the only thing many people still remember about the Osmonds' show is the song they would sing each time, "A Little Bit Country, a Little Bit Rock 'n Roll." At the time, Marie was a little bit country (she later be-

Hip-Hop Must-Haves

	SONG TITLE	ARTIST
1	C'mon N' Ride It (The Train)	QUAD CITY DJ'S
2	Gettin' Jiggy Wit It	WILL SMITH
3	Baby Got Back	SIR MIX-A-LOT
4	Shake Ya Tailfeather	MURPHY LEE
5	Hot In Herre	NELLY
6	Bust a Move	YOUNG MC
7	In Da Club	50 CENT
8	It Takes Two	ROB BASE
9	Funky Cold Medina	TONE LOC
10	Shoop	SALT-N-PEPA
11	Whoomp! There It Is	TAG TEAM
12	Ignition	R. KELLY
13	Wild Thing	TONE LOC
14	Let Me Clear My Throat	DJ KOOL
15	Whatta Man	SALT-N-PEPA & EN VOGUE
16	Baby Boy	BEYONCÉ
17	Take It to Da House	TRICK DADDY
18	Ride Wit Me	NELLY
19	Whoot, There It Is	95 SOUTH
20	Rump Shaker	WRECKX-N-EFFECT
21	Air Force Ones	NELLY
22	Gossip Folks	MISSY ELLIOTT
23	Work It	MISSY ELLIOTT
24	U Can't Touch This	HAMMER
25	No Diggity	BLACKSTREET
26	California Love	2PAC
27	OPP	NAUGHTY BY NATURE
28	Get Ur Freak On	MISSY ELLIOTT
29	Gimme the Light	SEAN PAUL
30	Humpty Dance	DIGITAL UNDERGROUND
31	Hip Hop Hooray	NAUGHTY BY NATURE
32	Mo Money Mo Problems	NOTORIOUS B.I.G.
33	Raise the Roof	LUKE
34	Back That Thang Up	JUVENILE
35	Always On Time	JA RULE
36	Family Affair	MARY J. BLIGE
37	Livin' It Up	JA RULE
38	Bounce With Me	BOW WOW
39	I'm Real	JENNIFER LOPEZ w/ JA RULE
40	Da Dip	FREAK NASTY

came a major country star in the early 1980s) and Donny was more than a little bit rock and roll. In just one song, they were able to blend a variety of genres. They had the same goal with their song as Mobile DJs do at their events: regardless of variety and diversity, to always ensure that each show ends in perfect harmony.

The rule of thumb is to stick to what you know almost always works, and keep music flowing that is familiar to everyone. Many of the hip-hop songs in this issue's list are also found in our "party" category. Some of these songs have found a permanent place as party essentials and will be staples for years to come. The majority of the top country songs listed are slow songs and are often played at wedding receptions, typically for the bride and groom's first dance. We have had many brides and grooms tell us that they don't want country music played at their event, but then go ahead and request many of the country love songs we list in our "wedding" category. Like the top hip-hop songs, the faster country songs listed are party standards also.

We have focused on only two selected categories—country and hip-hop—to highlight the common challenge we face of playing a wide variety of music to please a diverse crowd. The more diverse the crowd, the greater the challenge of pleasing everyone. The best advice is to not venture too far on either side of the musical road in any one particular genre. Keep the music diverse, but stay in the middle of the road. Driving the party in this direction will generally not alienate guests, since you're playing music that is familiar to a majority of the crowd. Play only a ten to fifteen-minute set of music in one genre and then bridge into the next style with a standard party song or a slow song or two.

I've met many people who say that they are DJs. What they really mean is that they have occasionally pushed play on a CD player causing music to come out of a speaker. The test of the truly professional disc jockey lies in the ability to mix the music and communicate with the audience. Everyone wants his or her music played next. A disc jockey who can effectively guide the requests back into the mainstream of the requested genre will be able to keep the party flowing smoothly while making individual guests happy too.•

Country's Most-Requested

	SONG TITLE	ARTIST
1	Friends In Low Places	GARTH BROOKS
2	I Hope You Dance	LEE ANN WOMACK
3	Breathe	FAITH HILL
4	Boot Scootin' Boogie	BROOKS & DUNN
5	When You Say Nothing At All	ALISON KRAUSS
6	Family Tradition	HANK WILLIAMS JR.
7	To Make You Feel My Love	GARTH BROOKS
8	Any Man Of Mine	SHANIA TWAIN
9	This Kiss	FAITH HILL
10	Amazed	LONESTAR
11	It's Your Love	TIM MCGRAW & FAITH HILL
12	From This Moment On	SHANIA TWAIN
13	You're Still The One	SHANIA TWAIN
14	Cowboy Take Me Away	DIXIE CHICKS
15	I Cross My Heart	GEORGE STRAIT
16	It's Five O'clock Somewhere	ALAN JACKSON w/ JIMMY BUFFETT
17	Always On My Mind	WILLIE NELSON
18	I Like It, I Love It	TIM MCGRAW
19	Man! I Feel Like A Woman!	SHANIA TWAIN
20	Wide Open Spaces	DIXIE CHICKS
21	She Thinks My Tractor's Sexy	KENNY CHESNEY
22	Two Piña Coladas	GARTH BROOKS
23	Strawberry Wine	DEANA CARTER
24	That Don't Impress Me Much	SHANIA TWAIN
25	If Tomorrow Never Comes	GARTH BROOKS
26	Dance	GARTH BROOKS
27	Forever and Ever, Amen	RANDY TRAVIS
28	Keeper of the Stars	TRACY BYRD
29	You Never Even Called Me	DAVID ALLAN COE
30	Chattahoochee	ALAN JACKSON
31	Who's Your Daddy?	TOBY KEITH
32	I Swear	JOHN MONTGOMERY
33	Shameless	GARTH BROOKS
34	All My Rowdy Friends	HANK WILLIAMS JR.
35	I Can Love You Better	DIXIE CHICKS
36	She's My Kind of Rain	TIM MCGRAW
37	Beer For My Horses	TOBY KEITH & WILLIE NELSON
38	My Maria	BROOKS & DUNN
39	Carrying Your Love With Me	GEORGE STRAIT
40	I'll Be	REBA MCENTIRE

MUSIC NEWS

BACK TO PROGRESS!

By Fred Sebastian

Computers, DVDs, cell phones as home phones, classic tunes remixed as car commercials—oh, what progress has produced! For this writer it's produced an extraordinary appreciation for going back: back to when we could spend hours listening to music instead of learning how to digitally download, store, or retrieve it; and back to the excitement of opening that new CD in anticipation of the purest sound quality, instead of finding a new download gadget the size of a deer tick that stores seven billion songs and delivers sound slightly better than transistor radios of the fifties. True progress can only happen by looking back at the best we had. So here's a look back at a variety of great CD compilations, most of which are now out of print and in limited supply, making them important complements to any DJ music collection.

Anyone with an ear to dance radio and within listening distance of a major city is probably familiar with KISS Radio, a leader in dance broadcasting. ***KISS ANTHEMS*** is a two-CD compilation endorsed by KISS-FM as the ultimate club collection. It features hot club dance tracks from 1989 through 1997. Though the names of some may not be familiar, the sound is definitely popular club dance floor fare. Most of the 36 tracks are radio cuts, though it also includes several hard-to-find, original, full-length, extended versions of top dance tracks.

For full track listings or availability on any of the CDs in Music News, visit www.HitMusicb2b.com or call A.V.C. Sebastian at (973)731-5290

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Giv Me Luv	ALCATRAZ
Higher State of Consciousness	WINK
Keep On Jumpin' (Orig. Unreleased Edit)	TODD TERRY W/ MARTHA WASH & JOCELYN BROWN
Chime	ORBITAL
Playing with Knives	BIZARRE INC.
Sound of Eden	SHADES OF RHYTHM
Go	MOBY
La Luna '95	THE ETHICS
Groovebird	NATURAL BORN GROOVES
Do You Want Me	FELIX
Le Voie Le Soleil	SUBLIMINAL CUTS
The Difference	FUNNY WALKER
Push the Feeling On (The Dub Of Doom)	NIGHTCRAWLERS
Tears	FRANKIE KNUCKLES
Beautiful People	BARBARA TUCKER
Reach	LIL MO' YIN YANG

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The '60s and '70s were fertile times for music. During this time, soul music rose to popularity. It gave a voice to, and celebrated on many levels, the black experience in the US. It also enriched the world with inspiring musical stylings, from the Motown sound of the '60s to the beats of funk and disco in the '70s, which continue to influence the music world. ***THE GREATEST SOUL ALBUM OF ALL TIME*** may be a bit strong for a title, but a great forty-song, two-CD compilation of classic soul it certainly is.

You Are Everything	MARVIN GAYE w/ DIANA ROSS
Rock Me Tonight	FREDDIE JACKSON
Ain't No Sunshine	BILL WITHERS
How 'Bout Us	CHAMPAIGN
Me & Mrs. Jones	BILLY PAUL
Cherish	KOOL & THE GANG
Gotta Get You Home Tonight	EUGENE WILDE
Juicy Fruit	MTUME
Your Body's Callin'	R. KELLY
Body Talk	IMAGINATION
Always	ATLANTIC STARR
Shake You Down	GREGORY ABBOTT
Streetlife	THE CRUSADERS
Rock Wit'cha	BOBBY BROWN
I Want to Get Next to You	ROSE ROYCE

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Every DJ should recognize the importance of spicing up performances with sound bites, entrance themes, etc. One effective and amusing way to entertain the crowds and break up the monotony is to use famous cartoon themes. ***TOON TUNES*** is a double-CD compilation of fifty songs and themes from popular cartoons both old and new. An easy way to add some unexpected fun to many events.

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Huckleberry Hound (Main Title)
Quick Draw McGraw (Main Title)
Fractured Fairy Tales
Peabody's Improbable History
The Flintstones (Main Title: "Meet The Flintstones")
Felix the Cat
Yogi Bear (Main Title)
Snagglepuss (Syndicated Titles with Sub-Main and End Titles)
The Bullwinkle Show
Dudley Do-Right
The Alvin Show Theme (Opening)
Beany And Cecil
Wally Gator (Main Title with Sub-Main and End Titles)
Lippy the Lion & Hardy Har Har (Main Title with Sub-Main and End Titles)
The Jetsons (Main Title)
Top Cat (Main Title)
Magilla Gorilla (Main Title)
Peter Potamus (Main Title)
Jonny Quest (Main Title)
Underdog
Peanuts ("Linus and Lucy")
Gigantor
Space Ghost (Main Title)
Go Go Gophers
The Atom Ant Show (Main Title)
The Secret Squirrel Show (Main Title)
George of the Jungle
Super Chicken
Spiderman
Speed Racer
The Banana Split
Adventure Hour (Main Title)
Dastardly & Muttley in Their Flying Machines ("Stop That Pigeon!")
Josie & The Pussycats (Main Title)
Pebbles & Bamm Bamm (Main Title)
The New Scooby Doo Movies (Main Title)

...and more

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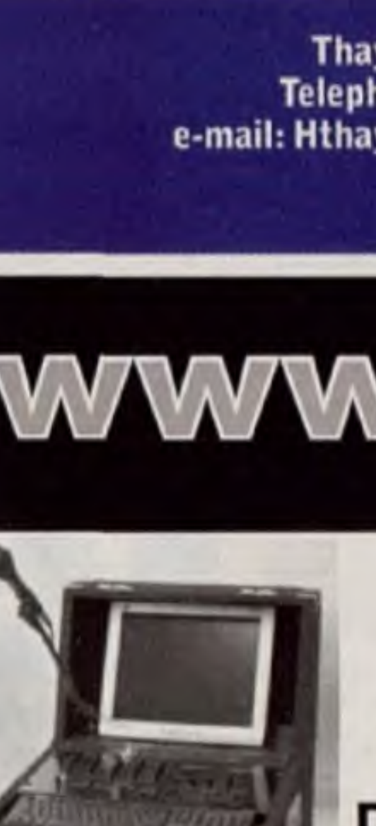

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TM Century (www.tmcentury.com) has launched two new formats: ***PrimeCuts Dance*** and ***PrimeCuts Smooth Jazz***. An evolution of the *HitDisc D*, TM Century redesigned the look of the disc and insert to match the format of the *PrimeCuts* discs. *PrimeCuts Dance* will provide the hottest dance hits and is perfect for DJs and clubs.

PrimeCuts Smooth Jazz was developed to satisfy an overwhelming DJ demand for new smooth jazz music. Similar to the company's other recurrents, it is guaranteed to provide at least six issues per year. The disc is formatted by tempo—slow, medium and fast.

"It will be geared towards Mobile DJs who need 'mood' music for banquets, meals at weddings, cocktail hours, etc.," explained Dave Foster, Music Director at TM Century.

Promo Only has released ***Urban Mix Video, Volume 2***, the newest in its line of specialty DVD music video compilations, hot on the heels of the successful MTV2 *Monster Mix* music video show (airing daily on MTV2 from 4-5 pm EST). It features the same exclusive Promo Only-produced, beat-mixed, hip-hop videos that have made the groundbreaking MTV program an instant sensation.

Featuring 36 chart-topping videos, *Urban Mix Video, Vol. 2* offers a seamless, non-stop blend of the best of 2003. Songs include: "P.I.M.P" by 50 Cent, "Baby Boy" by Beyonce, "Hey Ya!" by Outkast, "Stand Up" by Ludacris, "Right Thurr" by Chingy, and more. Complete track listings are available at **www.promoonly.com**.

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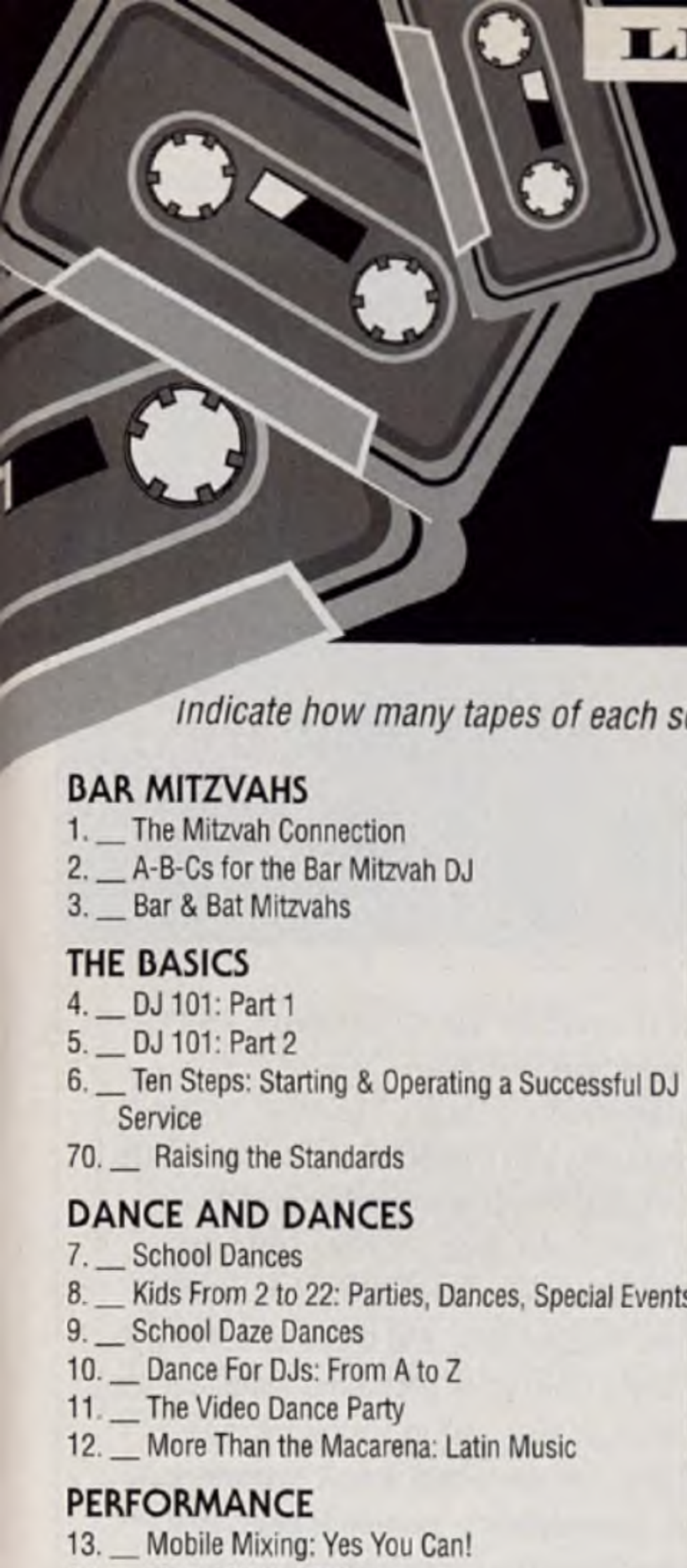

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Virtual Vocal Cavalcade

By Jammin' Jim Kerins

PCDJ KJ software from Visiosonic drops mobility and performance power into your laptop

The older I get, the lazier I get. That's why, when I heard about Visiosonic's new karaoke software, I got excited. If I could get all of my karaoke songs into my laptop computer, and not have to drag a player, crates full of CD+Gs, and heavy TV monitors, you might soon see all of my old gear for sale on eBay.

Building Computer Confidence

Certainly, if you're familiar with my other reviews, you know that I am a hardware kind of guy—speakers, amplifiers, and mixers. You know, stuff that you can hold in your hands with knobs that you can tweak. I need tactile sensations. However, I have seen DJs with laptops at parties and weddings, and they have nothing but good things to say about the technology. In my previous experiences with older laptops, I was always concerned, thinking, "What if that little hard drive dies?"

Fast-forward to today. I have used Firewire and USB hard drives with my video editing system, and they are awesome. They are cheap enough and big enough that it is now practical to back up all of your files (i.e., MP3s) onto these super-cool storage devices. So when the big cheese (Dan the Editor) of the magazine told me he needed PCDJ KJ software reviewed, it was the only provocation I needed to run down to [fill in the blank with your favorite local mega-electronics store] and buy myself a new Sony Vaio, loaded with a half-gig of RAM, a P4 2.8GHz processor, and a dual-display Radeon graphics card. (See sidebar for PCDJ KJ's minimum operating requirements.) If the endeavor were to go horribly wrong, I still had two weeks to return the computer. I love capitalism.

Filling the Virtual Rack

The software can be ordered from the PCDJ Web site (www.pcdj.com) as a download or a boxed version. I chose the download, for instant gratification. The KJ software can be used as a stand-alone product, or as a plug-in for PCDJ FX, using Visiosonic's new VRM modular technology. [See the review of PCDJ FX in the January 2004 issue of *Mobile Beat* (#85, p. 4) for more on VRM. –*Ed.*] I opted for the full package, as this enables a few more interactive features.

I found the download simple enough, however, under the guise of software security, you'll need to be connected to the Visiosonic server in order to get your registration code. This does a number of things: It keeps your computer geek friends from stealing the software on the 'Net (thus making you mad), it keeps prices reasonable, and it keeps software development going. I had a few minor problems installing the software, but when I made a quick call to Visiosonic's tech support, in less than three minutes I had a real, knowledgeable person on the line. He solved my self-imposed problem within just a few more minutes. Hooray! Customer service is still alive. After successful installation, I printed out the online manual and followed the instructions to set up my computer. Easy enough.

Getting Loaded

To get completely up and running, I needed to create some MP3+G files. Luckily, just before I commenced my review, the developers added karaoke graphics capability (the +G part) to FX's built-in MP3 ripper.

One of the greatest fears I had about ripping thousands of songs into my computer was the daunting task of having to manually enter all of the artist's names, song titles and other information. Thankfully, the software has a self-launching connection to an independent Internet database site. An impressive 95% of my songs magically appeared with their full information in the ripper window. I was amazed. You can also manually enter, and edit track info. The manual also offers ideas for creatively managing and categorizing your song files.

I was able to rip 128 songs at the default setting of 160 kbps, while consuming just 700 MB of disk space. This extrapolates to about 1,800 songs on only 10 GB of hard drive space, but your results may vary. At this compression rate, the songs sound pretty good through my sound system. (It's

usually the singer mucking up the sound quality anyway.)

Singing in the Digital Domain

Throwing caution to the wind, I toted my not-yet-paid-for laptop, loaded with KJ software and tons of tunes, to my Thursday night karaoke show. The software works just fine with a standard video card, however, if you want to exploit its truly professional features, you need to have a multi-display video card. My laptop's card was ready. For my show, I brought a 15-inch LCD monitor. This allowed me to view the karaoke and DJ players on my laptop, while sending just the karaoke screen to the other monitor for the singers. Plus, I was able to hook up the club's televisions with the TV output on my laptop. So cool.

Connecting my laptop audio output to a channel in my board was as simple as plugging in one stereo cable (mini to RCA). This gave adequate sound quality, however a more robust sound card, or even an external USB sound card would provide better sound and expanded output options. I fired up the PC, and we were ready to rock.

Mary to the Stage, Please

The PCDJ FX Record Case window is where you access all your files. You can search alphabetically by artist, title, or other parameters. The keyword search is great—all you have to do is type in a word or phrase, and it automatically finds the song. Loading the track is as easy as drag and dropping into KJ's player window. There's also a window for singers on deck. You simply type in the singer's name and click on the song. When it's their turn, you just click to load the singer. Or you could click on the Kamikaze button. (Is that WW II fighter plane logo on it politically correct?) This feature randomly selects a song from the database for the daring singer. It certainly could spice up the night.

Looking Around the VRM

The software player appears and performs like any hardware karaoke player you may have used before, plus it has some cool extras. All of the standard controls and indicators are present: play, rewind, cue points, counters, and track info display. When used in conjunction with PCDJ FX, you can set the DJ player to play a regular track once the karaoke singer is done, thus avoiding potential dead air.

Straightforward audio controls include volume, three-band EQ, and nice VU meters. And KJ can not only change the key in half steps, as with most karaoke machines, but it can also speed up or slow down the track without changing its key. Both features can be used simultaneously. This is great for when Mary complains that her song is too slow *and* in the wrong key. Now you can speed it up, drop it into her baritone range, and get her off the stage, without ruining the sound of the backing track.

Extra Visual Stimulation

A lot of fine-tuning can be accomplished in the configuration editor. This box allows tweaks to file management, tempo, key-span, timing for auto-launching the DJ players, and even color and font choices for the karaoke screen. Normally, KJ displays (on all the club's TVs, with the right video card) who the next singer is and what song they're singing. So, now hopefully I won't have to call Mary's name 50 times. Another hidden gem is the ability to replace the default PCDJ KJ output screen with a bit-map of your own creation. Now, whenever there isn't a singer on-deck, the output screens will show my company's name and logo.

Jammin' Jim, Software Karaoke Guy?

After using this system on several gigs, I was impressed at how powerful and simple it was to use. It made finding songs, organizing the singer list, and controlling the audio amazingly easy. It cut my workload in half, and actually made hosting more fun. I now have more time to talk to girls at the bar, and tell them what great singers they are, while the PCDJ KJ practically runs itself.

Running the software on a modern laptop, it demonstrated amazing stability, with no problems whatsoever. The idea of putting my entire CD and karaoke collection on one small machine and accessing it with software now actually makes sense. Certainly, the karaoke software is a fine stand-alone program, however, combining it with PCDJ FX makes it a complete DJ/KJ entertainment package. •

To contact Jammin' Jim, or to join his Overcoming Fear of Computers support group, e-mail him at jkerins@rochester.rr.com.

Visiosonic
1881 Drew St. #A
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Tel: 727-799-3828
Fax: 727-799-2747
www.pcdj.com

PCDJ FX / KJ

Minimum Requirements
- Intel Pentium III processor, 750 MHz
- 128 MB RAM
- DirectX 9 / Windows Media 9 drivers
- Windows 2000 or XP
- CD-ROM drive
- 16-bit graphics card (800 x 600 minimum)
- DirectX- or Windows Media Player-compatible sound card

Recommended Specifications
- 1 GHz processor (Pentium or AMD)
- 512 MHz DDR RAM
- 60 GB or larger hard drive
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- Windows 2000 Pro or XP Pro DirectX 9
- Windows Media Player 9
- 64-bit, multi-output video card

MSRPs:

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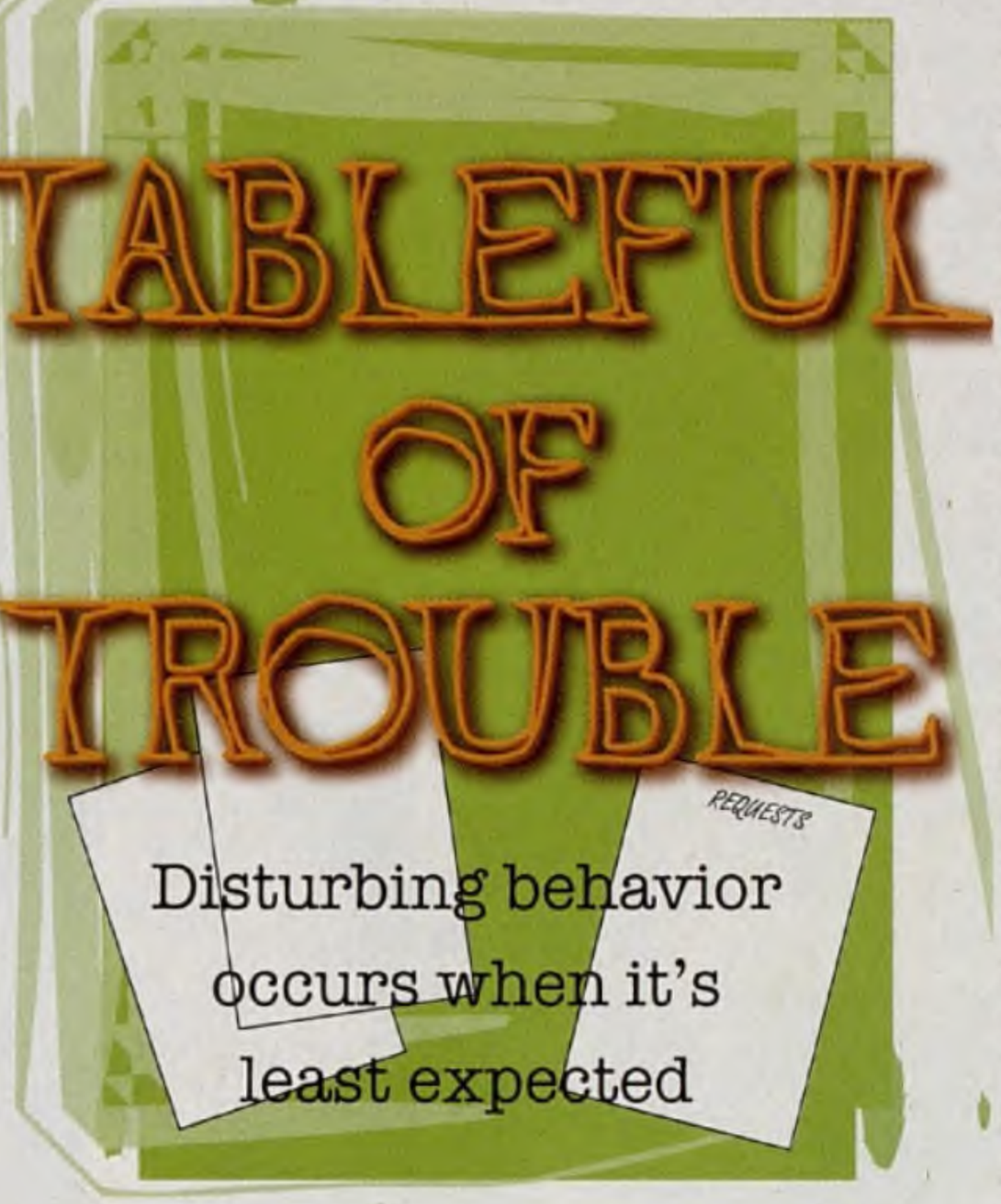

Over the years, my partner and I have done well over 2,000 events, but nothing prepared me for one particular night. A last-minute call had come in for a 200-person, high school ROTC graduation celebration at a local hotel. With a bunch of military bases in the area and a large number of ROTCs in the surrounding high schools, we had done many of these events in the past. Even though the attendees are teens, they are usually very disciplined.

Most of the time I work with an assistant, but he already had plans for that evening. I made the fateful decision to do it alone.

I arrived early, got set up, and placed a table for requests next to my gear. Then I joined in the rehearsal for the flag ceremony, a usual part of these events. During that time, the person in charge of the event informed me that no rap or vulgar music was allowed that night. I explained to him that certain popular songs, like "Who Let the Dogs Out," were borderline rap, and he said those were fine to play. But at the top of the song request sheet, he wrote in big red letters, "NO RAP MUSIC ALLOWED."

The evening started smoothly, with the flag ceremony and dinner proceeding flawlessly. After dinner, several speakers gave congratulations and advice to those seeking future military careers. That's when things started turning ugly.

A group of teens, who, in contrast to the other graduates, were out of uniform, started heckling from a table in the back. I could tell immediately that these kids were going to be a problem. I just wasn't aware of how much of a problem.

When the speakers were done, it was time for a couple of hours of dancing. I announced that there was a table up front with song lists and a song request book. Immediately people came up and filled two pages of the song request book. As I glanced at the book to take care of a few initial requests, the troublesome teens from the back gathered around my table. They stayed there looking at the song sheets for about ten minutes and then all left at once. When I looked again at the song request book, the sheets of other people's requests were gone, leaving only a page of rap music requests. I tore out the rap music request pages, then wrote at the top of the page that the previous music request sheets were missing and that rap music was not allowed. Soon I was being hounded by small squads of other students asking me whether I'd gotten their requests, forcing me to explain repeatedly what happened to the sheets. I finally decided to make an announcement about the problem.

Soon after that, an instructor went to the group and asked who had done it. A female member of the troublesome table returned one ripped page of the request book, which she said she had found on the floor. The group then left the ballroom. After about 20 minutes, I was beginning to think they had left for good, but suddenly they returned. Just then a hotel security guard made an announcement: "If one more student goes into the bar, the county sheriff will be called to handle the situation..."

Next thing I knew, the group was suddenly at the request table next to me, quite upset that their request sheets were gone and that rap music was not going to be played. They came up to both sides of the DJ booth, pestering me to play their music. One of the taller, more intimidating teens kept saying, "Come on, you can play this one," over and over while pointing to a CD in my case. I didn't realize it, but this was a distraction for what his friends were doing on the other side: grabbing CDs. Several songs passed before they walked away. Then they repeated the scenario, with one of the girls distracting me while the others were busy taking things. When she walked away I immediately realized that a cordless mic was also gone. This prompted me to take inventory to see what else was missing. Besides some small items, one of my smaller cases full of trance mix music was gone, as well as about 6 DVDs from my video case.

I contacted the host and he assured me that he would do something about it, but when he and some other administrators went to the back table, they couldn't get the items back. After that, occupants of the trouble table kept coming up to me until the end of the event, insisting that they had not taken anything. One even threatened me for accusing them.

The total replacement value for the items stolen was about $750, while we had booked the event at a discount rate of $425. My partner and I discussed what we could do in the future to make sure this never happens again. We decided that the music request table should be located away from the DJ stand; that no one should ever be allowed behind the stand, for any reason; to limit the number of CD cases that are open at any given time; to watch out for similar suspicious situations in the future; and, most importantly, to always make sure that an assistant is available. We certainly learned our lesson—the hard way.•

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